Gary Moore Remembered

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& BASS MAGAZINE

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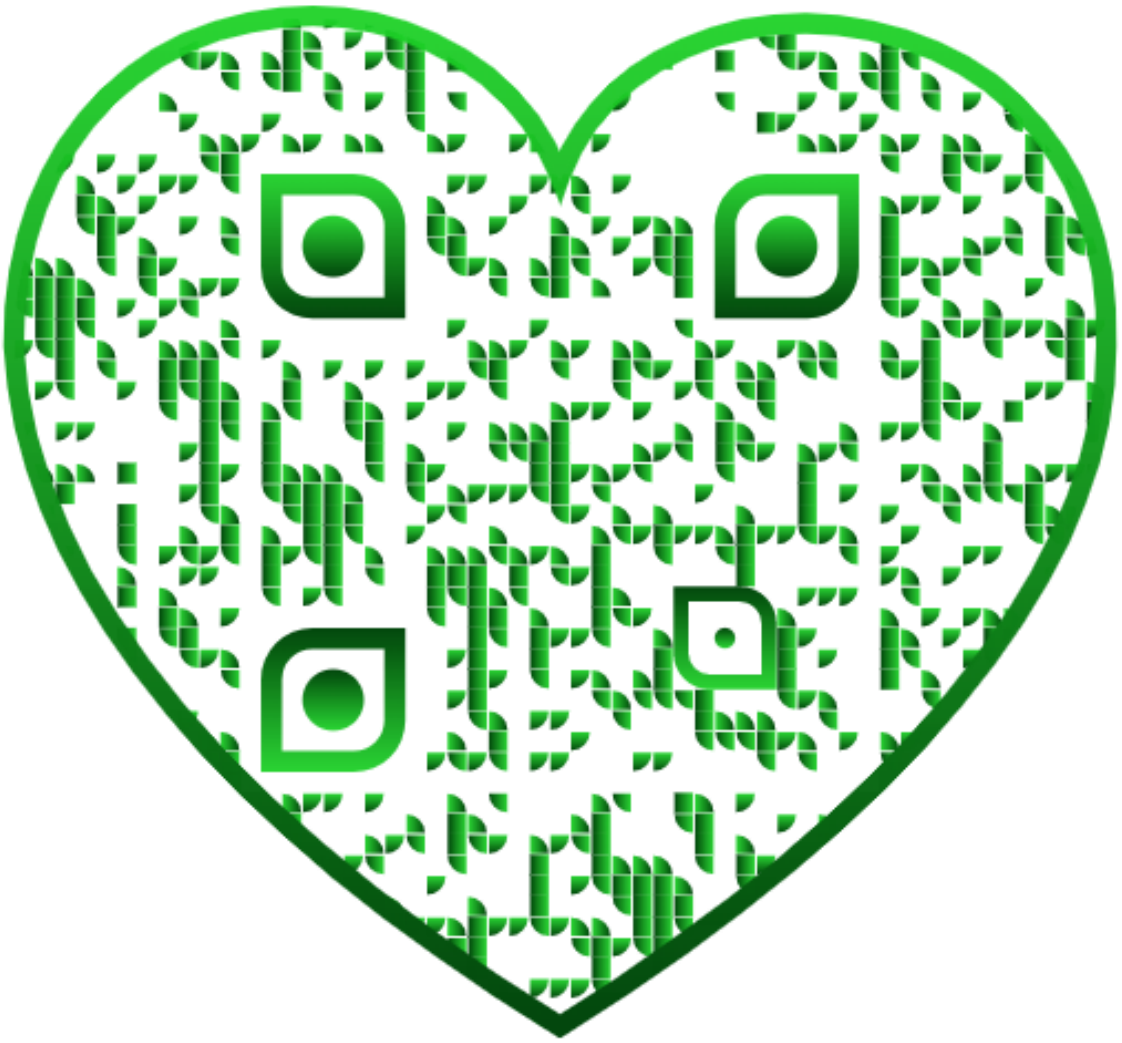

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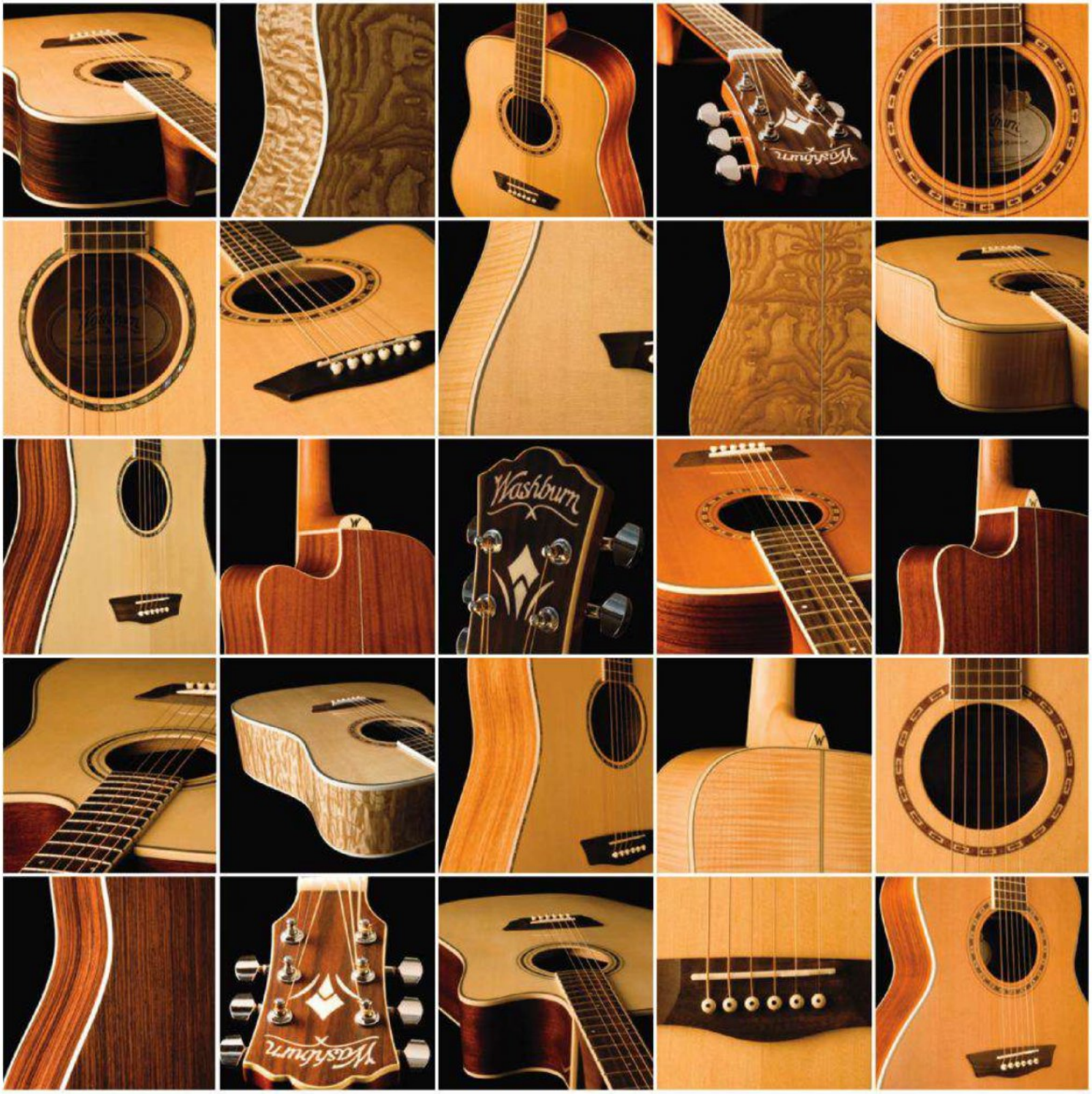
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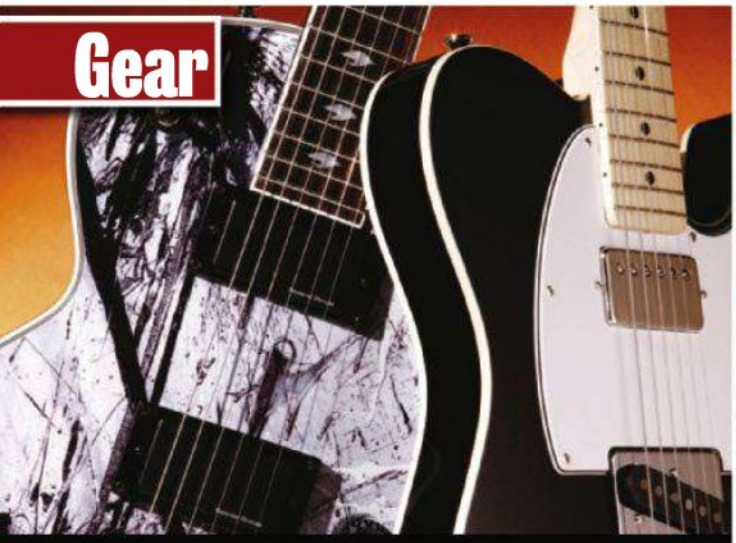
Contents

April 2011 Vol 22 No.07

Gear



68 ESP RON WOOD & LTD GUS-600EC
Two tasty signatures from different ends of the park

72 LODESTONE PULSE
Glitzy, sturdy and affordable

76 MARSHALL AFD100
Appetite for reproduction

80 LINE 6 DT50 212 COMBO
Half-modelling half-valve hybrid

84 LAG TRAMONTANE T300D & T300AE ACOUSTICS
Gallic styling with that certain something

88 FENDER ROGER WATERS PRECISION BASS
Iconic Floyd bass with a tidy trim

93 DIGITECH BP355 BASS MULTI-FX
Value mix of effects and modelling

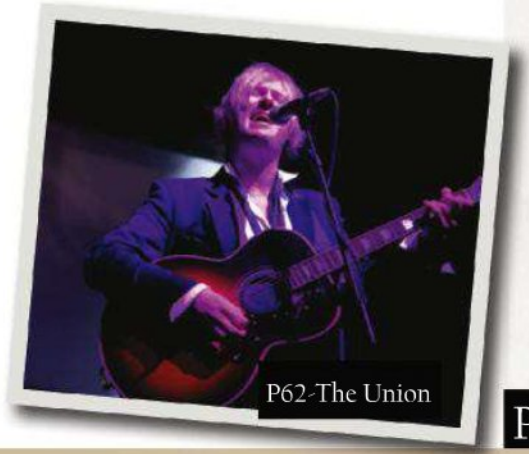
95 RAPID REVIEWS
Score writing software and an all-round mic

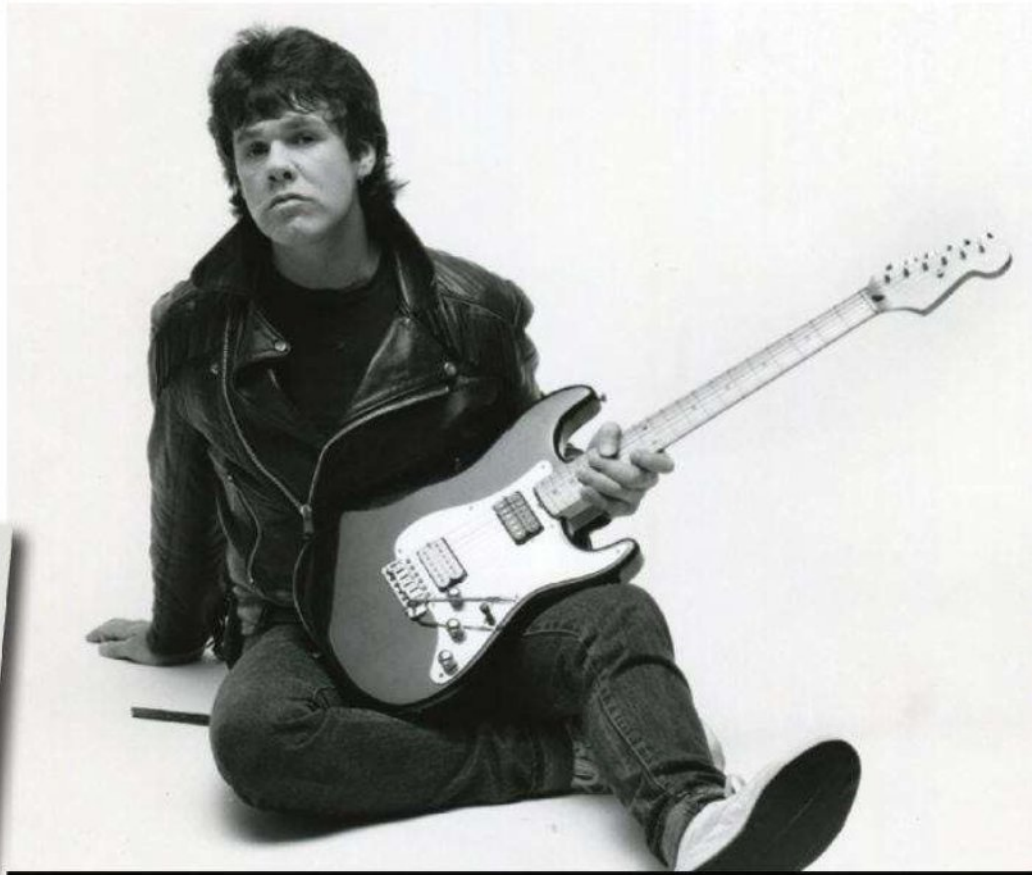
Features

48 GARY MOORE
The man, the music, the legacy: our tribute to a truly exemplary talent

54 PETER FRAMPTON
One-time teen icon and Talkbox fanatic discusses his ambitious new album

62 THE UNION
We meet the two generations that paired up for one of our albums of 2011





P48-R.I.P Gary Moore

Guitar & Bass Magazine

Regulars

6 NEWS
The 50th Anniversary SG Standard 24

8 TREASURED POSSESSIONS
Sel Balamir on his pimped pedalboard

11 SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE
Kassidy's Chris Potter on his top sounds

12 TALES FROM THE ROAD
Adi Vines gets a handle on it

14 LETTERS
You talk, we listen

16 ALBUMS
Bonamassa's latest offering

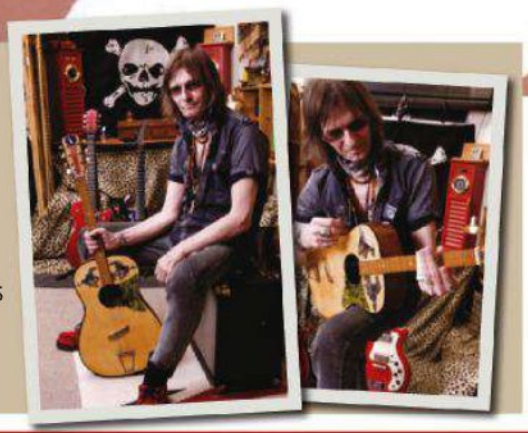
132 READERS ADS
Clearout, buy-in

146 BACK STAGE
Syd Barrett, the birth of PRS and more

Cover Story

18 NAMM 2011 SHOW REPORT
FROM DINKY SOLAR-POWERED TUNERS TO THE MOST EXQUISITE EXAMPLES OF LUTHIERIE, WE GIVE YOU THE LOWDOWN ON THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BIGGEST MUSIC GEAR SHOW IN THE GUITARIST'S CALENDAR

Vintage



99 HOOKED ON CLASSICS
Phil Harris looks back at 1973 and the kit that defined the year

104 PRIVATE COLLECTION
Rock'n'roll veteran Ray Majors has one of the quirkiest collections to ever grace these pages. Michael Heatley takes a closer look

Tuition

136 JOHNNY WINTER
Winter's unending box of tricks, from open tunings to masterful dynamics

142 BOZ BURRELL
We delve into Burrell's affinity with the groove and find out how he brought fretless bass back onto rock's radar

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Page 96

Woke Up This Mornin'

News

Gary Moore 1952-2011

We were shocked and saddened to hear the recent news that ex-Thin Lizzy guitarist Gary Moore had died aged 58 on Sunday 6 February while on holiday in Spain. Moore was one of Britain's most respected rock/blues musicians, revered both for his work with many bands and as a successful solo artist. Turn to **page 48** for an in-depth appreciation of his career.

The Return Of A Classic

We've seen the Danelectro '56 Single Cutaway reissued in various delectable forms over the years, so it's a treat that they've decided to make another run for 2011. With several seductive models to mull over, it's likely to be a hit. Option #1 is primed for traditionalists with original lipstick single-coils, black or black/red crackle finish and Dano's distinctive 'coke bottle' headstock (£349-£369). Those who crave a bit more oomph can plump for the second option with a humbucker at the bridge, a single-coil at the neck and a 'dolphin' headstock (£369). Finally, a suave new white number comes with luxurious gold hardware and 'bell' headstock - a design that adorned the very first Danelectro-logoed models in 1954 (£369). See page 43 of our NAMM report for details of the '56 Single Cut Bass, too.

50 Years Of the SG

When it arrived in 1961, the guitar with 'the fastest neck in the world' was intended as a double-cutaway Les Paul. When Les Paul himself didn't take to it, it was renamed the Gibson 'Solid Guitar' and the rock fraternity went for its batwing silhouette like AC/DC to a powerchord. From Angus Young whipping the youth into a frenzy atop Bon Scott's shoulders or the psychedelic craziness of Clapton's Fool guitar, the SG is one hell of an electric guitar. To celebrate its half century, Gibson is unleashing a run of tributes - each with an iconic name attached - to embody the riotous original. The 50th Anniversary SG Standard 24 is the first, and while retaining the classic looks, it has a few updates for the modern player such as 24 medium jumbo frets, two PAF-style '57 classic humbuckers, Tune-O-Matic bridge/stopbar tailpiece and Plek-cut Corian nut. They've capped it all off with a '50 Years' headstock emblem and a tasty high-gloss nitro antique ebony finish. More information at www.gibson.com.

Guitar Nation

Music Nation have announced the second Guitar Nation expo, which will take place at the NEC in Birmingham on 7-8 May. After the success of last year's show at London's Kensington Olympia, spreading out to the Midlands seems ideal for the follow-up. This slice of guitar heaven will include the usual line-up of industry big guns, with Fender, Gibson, Marshall, PRS, Guitarguitar and Peavey already confirmed. World-class live performances will come from UK bluesman Stephen Dale Petit, Bernie Marsden (playing Rory Gallagher) and Phil Hilborne & Iron Maiden's Nicko McBrain with guests. There'll also be also masterclasses from the likes of Herman Li (Dragonforce), discussion panels, lectures and tuition clinics. Tickets: 0844 3380338, and visit www.guitarnationnec.com for updates.

Secret Shoppa

VISITING A GUITAR SHOP NEAR YOU!

TEIGN MUSIC, TEIGNMOUTH, DEVON

This quaint old seaside town in South Devon has more to offer than sticks of rock, ice cream and postcards. In just three short years, Teign Music has established a reputation as a fine all-round music store. 'Because we cater for all styles of music from violins to pointy guitars, we're surviving the recession really well,' theorises co-owner Peter Williams. 'For us, at least, the answer has been product selection.'

LAYOUT: With a new acoustic guitar wall, a spacious front area dedicated to sheet music and accessories and a back room stuffed full of amps and guitars, Teign Music has plenty of space to try out some of the latest gear

RANGE OF NEW GEAR: Mid-priced guitars are the main theme of Teign Music, with a neat selection of acoustic, bass and electric guitars from BC Rich, Gretsch, Dean, Fender, Jackson, Tanglewood, Lag, DBZ, Sheridan, Westfield, Squier, Parker, Adam Black, Cruiser, Turner, Ovation, Washburn, Faith, Amira and Freshman. Amps and combos include models from Marshall, Fender, Orange, Hiwatt, Randall and Laney

SECONDHAND GEAR: 'We always have good used selection in the rock'n'roll department,' says Peter. 'For instance, right now we have guitars by Luna, an Eagle double-neck, a Gretsch Electromatic, a gorgeous white USA Fender Strat with Lace Sensor pickups and blue pearloid scratchplate, and a triple-neck Manson with six, seven and 12-string necks.'

BEST BARGAIN IN THE SHOP: Quote a few to choose from. Fans of big-bodied semi-acoustics might like the idea of a Gretsch G100CE marked down from £845 to £549, and a handy Fender Blues Junior was down from £514 to £374

HIGHLIGHT: With such a diverse range of products Teign Music are supplying colleges, jazz cafes and local bands with everything from an oboe to a full PA system... and what better way to promote the shop than having your logo plastered over sponsored drum kits?

CONCLUSION: This shop was certainly very busy on a wet Friday afternoon, with lots of passing trade. We liked the fact that all involved were very pro-active; it's a well-stocked shop with some fine deals for the rock band member, but with a eye for supplying schools as well

VITAL STATISTICS

Layout	18/20
Staff knowledge	18/20
Staff helpfulness	19/20
Range of new gear	18/20
Range of secondhand gear	15/20
Parking	Plenty, car parks
TOTAL	88%

TEIGN MUSIC
CONTACT: 01626 773400
5 Carlton Place, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8AB
WEB: www.teignmusic.com

In Brief

Cambridge Folk

Tickets for the 2011 Cambridge Folk Festival have just gone on sale. As well as the usual broad mix of artists and performers, this year's event promises a fourth stage put on by young talent for young talent. The line-up is still under wraps, but last year's display set the bar high so it's worth booking early. As always, Cherry Hinton Hall is hosting.
28-31 July,
Full tickets £114,
Day tickets £50 (Sat/Sun),
£39 (Fri);
01223 357851;
www.cambridgefolkfestival.co.uk

Analogue To Digital

Now in its third year, the Analogue To Digital Music Expo is a unique opportunity for recording enthusiasts to explore the latest technology all under one roof. All the major companies and manufacturers will be there, and there'll be demos, workshops, live performances and Q&A sessions to keep you busy. A Music Industry Panel (including Radiohead producer John Leckie) will also be on hand to offer advice. Exeter Phoenix; 19th March; £6; www.sound-gallery.net/shop

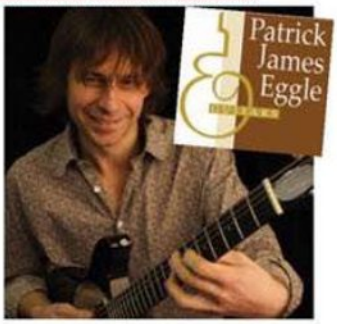
No More Heroes

After almost six years, Games publisher Activision is axing Guitar Hero following a downturn in sales. Fourteen versions of the game have been released since it landed in 2005, including lucrative special edition band-endorsed packs. No doubt the music industry has lost a valued revenue stream, but what does it mean for the guitar's popularity?

Tearjerker

The wah-wah pedal is right at the core of the evolution of rock'n'roll, so news that the first instalment of *Cry Baby: The Pedal That Rocks The World - The Movie* has been released was met with instant jubilation here at *Guitar & Bass*. The film, set to be issued in parts over the coming weeks, covers the history of this revolutionary pedal from its inception through to present day. Featuring interviews with its inventor Brad Plunkett, Eddie Van Halen, Slash, Paul Gilbert, Kirk Hammett and many other fanatics to the way of the wah, *Cry Baby...* is likely to be required viewing for any guitarist who ever set foot on one. See www.crybabydoc.com to watch the opening of this fascinating rockumentary.

Eggle Goes Electric



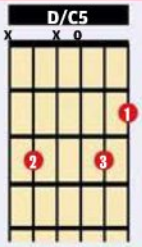
Patrick James Eggle hasn't built electrics since departing the company he co-founded back in '89. Right now, work at his Oswestry workshops is in full swing in preparation for the return. The Lizard has a mahogany body capped with walnut, maple and redwood, a 30-year-old Brazilian fretboard and a 'lizard' inlay made from over 200 fragments of shell and wood. There'll only be 20, so check www.eggle.co.uk for updates!

Shatner Gets Wylde

When it comes to odd couples, it doesn't get much more bizarre than certified metal-god Zakk Wylde and William 'Captain Kirk' Shatner. The pair got together at Wylde's Black Label Bunker studio to record, would you believe, a cover version of the Black Sabbath classic *Iron Man* for Shatner's upcoming *Seeking Major Tom* album. The album will be a selection of sci-fi themed tracks and is due out sometime later this year. It's heavy metal... but not as we know it.

The Lost Chord

This month we've got one chord on top of another – a two-note D chord on the top two strings above a two-note C5 chord across strings five and three. Damp the fourth string by lightly touching it with the second finger. Try arpeggiating it!



Woke Up This Mornin'...

Treasured Possessions

Multiple delays, stacked distortions... progressive rock trio Amplifier are obsessed with effects. It might all be getting a little bit out of hand

Sel Balamir

On the cult status of his eclectic

Pedalboard

Pedalboards always intrigue guitar-playing band followers, but Amplifier allow their fans' fascination to reach a whole new level. The trio even have pre-gig revealing ceremonies, with regal crushed velvet drapes dramatically swept aside by a roadie so the boards can be scrutinised by a crowd of effect enthusiasts.

Guitarist/frontman Sel Balamir and bassist Neil Mahony have made an art form of broadening their sound via a myriad of delays and distortions. 'It's like building your own engine,' Sel explains. 'It looks home-made, but we can strip it down and repair it ourselves. We can take all our amps apart and repair them too... we're like a hot rod garage! We were on tour with Opus and Porcupine Tree and they've got all their nice bespoke rigs and then there's ours all held together with gaffer tape! We don't just collect stuff... everything we have has a specific job.'

'We're no snobs. Most of our key pieces of equipment cost under £100'

When the band started 13 years ago Sel only possessed an amp and a lead, but he found that in order to compete with larger line-ups he had to find ways to beef up his sound. Early on he decided to go for stereo with two amplifiers.

'Basically, I took two reasonable amps and made one good composite sound out of them. The first two amps I got were an old Peavey with one giant 15" speaker and a little Tech 21 combo. The Peavey provided the top and the bottom, while the Tech 21 had the punch. Having two amps let me split for stereo, and that became an important element in spreading the sound of one guitar out as far as possible.'

An old green Sovtek Big Muff arrived early in Sel's collection; it's still a vital part of his set-up. The next acquisition was a Boss DD5, kept switched permanently on for a short reverse delay. Two old analogue Boss DM3s also proved essential. 'The great thing about having different delays beating against each other is you get things phasing and cancelling out,' says Sel. 'It sounds ethereal... panoramic. That's not just on the guitar - that's for the bass as well. A lot of the things that you think are guitar are bass, because Neil plays the way a guitarist would play bass.'

Distortions are also stacked together. Sel's Rocktron Austin Gold is always on; a Fulltone is his 'clean' distorted sound, and a Pro-Co Rat is a halfway house before the Big Muff.

Amplifier own a pile of expensive stompboxes, but cheapies take pride of place. 'We're no snobs,' Sel points out. 'All our key pieces of equipment cost under £100, and I'd say all my favourite gear is made by Zoom. The main bass sound is a Zoom 2000 bass FX unit which is about 15 years old... we've been through five of them. My Zoom 202 cost about £15, and it's an important element.'

Amplifier have moved their DIY pedalboard ethic into the studio and beyond, and you can hear all their weird and wonderful devices on the new album *Octopus*. 'We wanted to have fun making a record that stretched us as performers, writers, producers and mixers - we've done everything ourselves,' says Sel proudly. 'If you buy it from the website, it'll even be one of the band that puts it in the bag!'

info

LATEST ALBUM: OCTOPUS

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MORE INFO:

www.amplifiertheband.com

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8145	Fender Standard Mexican Jazz in Blue
8721	Fender Standard Jazz in Sunburst
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2701	Levin LB100J in Trans Red
2702	Levin LB200 in Cherry Sunburst
559	Levin LB400 in Red
8258	Levin LB100J in Antique Sunburst
8724	Levin LB100P in Black
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8264	FleaBass Model 32 Pro Punk in Green
7911	FleaBass Pro Water In Blue
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8129	Epiphone Viola in Vintage Sunburst
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5721	Bass Collection SP4 in Natural Yellow

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8354	Yamaha BB415 in Trans Orange
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6603	Mark Bass TA501 Head (500w)
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3626	Ashdown MAG300H Evo2 Head (300w)
695	Ashdown ABM900 EVO III Head (2x575w)
8116	Ashdown 427 Small Block Head (427w)
8117	Ashdown BTA300 Head (300w)
8471	Ashdown Little Bastard 30 Head (30w)
8644	Ashdown Gold Plate 30th Anni Mark King
5123	Ashdown AL MK500 Head (575w)
8120	Ashdown 550 Spyder Head (550w)
7536	Ashdown BTA400 Bass Head (400w)
8118	Ashdown BTA200 Bass Head (200w)
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8712	Peavey PRO410 Cab (4x10)
5866	Peavey Tour 215 Cab (2x15)
7764	Orange SP212 Cab (2x12)
7763	Orange SP210 Cab (2x10)
7765	Orange SP410 Cab (4x10)
7761	Orange OBC810 Cab (8x10)
4658	Orange OBC115 Cab (1x15)
4657	Orange OBC410H Cab (4x10)
6637	Marshall MBC115 Cab (1x15)
6638	Marshall MBC410 Cab (4x10)
2753	Marshall VBC810 Cab (8x10)
652	Marshall VBC412 Cab (4x12)
6639	Marshall MBC810 Cab (8x10)
7267	Mark Bass Classic 152 Cab (2x15)
4819	Mark Bass STD106HF Cab (6x10)
7140	Mark Bass STD152HR Cab (2x15)
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4818	Mark Bass STD102HF Cab (2x10)
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3615	Ashdown ABM210T Evo3 Cab (2x12)
3620	Ashdown ABM410T Cab (4x10)
3619	Ashdown ABM115 Cab (1x15)
8577	Ashdown LB212 Cab (2x12)
6599	Ashdown ABM810 Cab (8x10)
4737	Ashdown Mag 810 Deep Cab (8x10)
3632	Ashdown MAG410T Deep Cab (4x10)
3630	Ashdown MAG115 Deep Cab (1x15)
8032	Ashdown USA 115 Large Cab (1x15)
8124	Ashdown LB 212 Cab (2x12)
5118	Ashdown NEO 115H Comp Cab (1x15)
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Woke Up This Mornin'...

Soundtrack Of My Life

Kassidy

Kassidy: Hamish Fingland, Lewis Andrew, Chris Potter and Barrie James O'Neill

Spokesman Chris Potter tells us what fires up him and his Glaswegian acoustic quartet when they're not busy crafting emotionally-charged rootsy songs built to stay the distance

What, no traditional bass, drums, lead and rhythm guitar line-up? It just didn't work for Kassidy. It was only when all four of them showed up to a rehearsal clutching acoustic guitars that things really fell into place. Anthemic stomps have become their stock-in-trade, and the lack of a rhythm section is rarely even noticed – although they'll occasionally draught one in if friends are around to supply it. After no less than four EPs in two years you'd imagine that songs would be thin on the ground, but their debut album *Hope St.* is packed to the gills with yet more quality songsmithery. Kassidy are being pegged as beardy folky types, but Potter freely admits he does pull out his Gibson ES-339 and crank up the Marshall now and then. 'We're an acoustic band... but if one of our babies wants to be fed, we feed it!'

While My Guitar Gently Weeps is guitar perfection...

The Beatles

The White Album

What really sticks in my head is a memory of my dad sitting by my bed playing *Rocky Racoon* to me on the guitar. Sometimes as I drift off to sleep that song still pops into my head. When I first started to play, learning these songs and showing my dad that I could do them meant a lot to me. It's a huge cliché to choose this, but that's a testament to just how many people love it.

Paul Kossoff was a genius – my favourite guitarist ever...

Free

The Free Story

It feels like a cheat to pick a 'best of' but it's just so good! Kossoff's playing is full of emotion, but it's effortless... he never seemed to break a sweat. There's so much more to Free than *Alright Now*. The first track *I'm A Mover* never fails to make me smile, *I'll Be Creeping* has an awesome wah-wah on the intro, and the time change on *Songs Of Yesterday* is the grooviest thing ever.

I want Freebird played at my funeral – all 10 minutes of it...

Lynryd Skynryd

Pronounced Leh-nerd Skin-nerd

Freebird is like the Deep South's *Bohemian Rhapsody*! It goes off like a runaway train at the end – it lifts you physically and emotionally, like all good songs should. Again, it upsets me that their other stuff doesn't get enough attention. *Give Me Three Steps*, *Tuesday's Gone* and *Poisoned Whiskey* would all be the making of any band.

This album made me want to play loud and heavy again...

Grinderman

Grinderman

I used to play in a lot of rock bands, and this threw me right back to the days when loud was good. The song *No Pussy Blues* just has immense power – you really *feel* the music. Warren Ellis plays this tiny tenor guitar but he gets so much expression out of it. There's a lesson here: don't get too book-smart. Grinderman are bringing back the raw power of expression!

His mantra is just play and don't worry what people say...

The White Stripes

Get Behind Me Satan

They have tunes with singalong capabilities, like *Little Ghost*. You can imagine them playing on a porch in rocking chairs. Then there's his riffs, like on *Blue Orchid*, that rip open your speakers with awesome crunch. Jack White is so enigmatic; people just can't tap into his code – he's becoming an icon, like Tom Waits or Kurt Cobain, and we're lucky to have someone like that around.

People just don't realize the sheer power of his lyrics...

Gerry Rafferty

City To City

At Gerry's funeral his family did a acapella version of the last track, *Waiting For The Day*, and that was such a lovely gesture. There are no better storytellers than Rafferty. Everybody knows *Baker Street*, but songs like *Mattie's Rag* – about coming home from tour and seeing his daughter's face – go way beyond. All the songs on here are beautiful, and the guitar playing is too.

Play This Track From My Album...

Kassidy

Hope St.

We were just jamming at the end of the day in the studio and the last song *Betrayal* came out of that. Everyone in the room had a guitar and was playing the same single string riff – it became an *Oh Well* type of thing, which is a ripping end to the album. I even got my electric out for it.

Animate OBJECTS

It's safer to casually refer to your beloved guitar as 'the Tele' rather than blurt out 'Rosebud' in an unguarded moment and risk the hilarity of your bandmates. Why do we name guitars? Adi Vines has some theories that might make sense

My mate Andy is a petrolhead. He owns a beautifully restored Lotus Esprit nicknamed Roxy (the reasons for which he remains uncharacteristically coy about). The practice of giving cars pet names is quite widespread, and of course yachts and ships have names emblazoned all over them. Perhaps cars and boats are humanised by their owners in this way because they have distinct personalities and often cause joy and frustration in equal measure. If that sounds familiar, it's probably because there's something else that can do exactly the same... a musical instrument. The one closest to our hearts being, of course, the guitar.

Leaving aside signature models, because that's too obvious (an Angus, Eddie or Joan being a Young, Van Halen and Jett and so on), Eric Clapton's Blackie is probably the best-known example of a nicknamed guitar, followed by Billy Gibbons' Pearly Gates and BB King's Lucille. I have something in common with BB King; I once owned a pair of Rickenbacker 4001s, one of which was nicknamed Sandra after a somewhat treacherous old girlfriend. The Ricky had the same tendency to betray my efforts to conquer it as she did.

Moving swiftly on, there's Willie Nelson's Trigger, a late '60s Martin, and Neil Young's Old Black, a refinished 1953 Goldtop. Here again I have something in common with a legend: I am also acquainted with a nicknamed Goldtop, one that goes by the name of Ernie. It's not a reference to a dear friend or an unfortunately departed relative but a nod to Benny Hill's 1971 hit single *Ernie, The Fastest Milkman In The West*, as the titular character in the lyrics 'rushed into the street with his goldtop in his hand' (note to younger readers: ask your granddad what goldtop milk was).

Curiously, but coincidentally, Ernie's horse in the aforementioned song is named Trigger, though it is unconfirmed and somewhat unlikely that this is what inspired Willie Nelson.

Elsewhere I have worked with the Red Bitch, a mid-'60s Fender Jaguar so named because of its bright red paint job, and Dune, an early 1990s Les Paul that was 'bought in June' and is 'erm.. a bit sandy-coloured,' according to the owner. Shuck was another Les Paul, a black Standard, named after a ghostly black hound of hell named Black Shuck who is reputed to roam the countryside of Eastern England striking terror into the hearts of the locals (although naming a guitar after this spectre would seem to indicate a similar intent in its owner, no such behaviour has been noted so far). I've also been familiar with the yang to this guitar's ying in the form of a spotless white LP Custom that became known as the Alpine Slut. A friend of Sandra's, perhaps?

I know a Les Paul Goldtop called Ernie – a reference to Benny Hill's Ernie, The Fastest Milkman In The West, who 'rushed into the street with a goldtop in his hand'

Finally, what other possible nom de guerre could one give to an Ampeg/Dan Armstrong Plexiglass guitar than to christen it the Perspex Avenger? Technically both the manufacturer and the owner are incorrect as Perspex and Plexiglass are brand names and the actual material is polymethylmethacrylate... but that's not very poetic. Still, we will forgive the owner because he is the man who, upon first setting eyes on an Ibanez Jem in the original floral pattern, cried out loud 'Aha! Grandmother's curtains!' The name, naturally, sticks to this day.

Now, if you will excuse me, the Treacle Bomb needs a string change. I really must go.

Adi Vines has worked with Radiohead, the Sex Pistols, the Darkness, Razorlight and others. See www.xselectronics.co.uk for more

Guitar

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Star Letter

Recording King ROS-16: a guitar so good, it didn't even need NGJP

JUSTIFY MY LOVE

I really must thank you for pointing me in the direction of my latest guitar, a Recording King ROS-16, which had a rave review in the October 2010 mag and also featured in your *Gear Of The Year* edition. Until then I had really not seen the point of smaller-body 12-fret guitars (especially as I already own a lovely Martin D-35).

When my wife and I were in Norwich doing the January sales, I saw one and had to have a go. I was gobsmacked and completely smitten. Everything you said was absolutely spot on. When the geezer offered £50 off AND my wife (unprompted) offered to go halves, I didn't even have to switch on my NGJP (New Guitar Justification Procedure).

I can't stop playing it and I think it has already sent me off in various new playing directions. It's not just a picker, either. Try the acoustic power chords on, say, Boz Scaggs' *I Just Go* from his 2001 album *Dig* – awesome! Next stop will be a suitable pickup; then hopefully the boss (see www.lizsimcock.com) will let me use it on stage. Thanks again for the best guitar mag, and keep up the good work.

Warwick Jones
via email

ARIA

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G&B: It always brings a smile when we can play gear matchmaker, but as much as we like having our egos stroked, what earned your letter its star status was your New Guitar Justification Procedure. We need chapter and verse on this rational-sounding procedure. We would love to have some robust means of proving to our nearest-and-dearest how spending money on guitars is scientifically a good thing with graphs, charts and fancy-looking formulas – and I suspect we're not alone.

JUNK SHOP GUITARS YOU MAKE THE ROCKIN' WORLD GO ROUND

Bleary-eyed and before breakfast I opened the door to an irate-looking postman. Tucked under his arm was a package shaped like an oar, bundled in (I'm guessing here) three miles worth of tape. I signed for it, put the kettle on, opened the knife drawer and selected my apparatus like a backstreet surgeon, hoping that at least one of the steak knives would be able to slice through the goopy tape tar that kept its innards in a cocooned suspension. After 10 minutes of wrestling with the tape tentacles it was free and sitting beaming on the kitchen table; another junk shop guitar!

I'm a self-diagnosed guitar freak (a left-handed one at that, making cheap-and-suitable oddball guitars a rarity), so this was a 'Dr Frankenstein firing the electrodes' kind of moment.

I bought this guitar for the original DiMarzio Super Distortion pickup tucked next to its wrapover chrome bridge. A fixer-upper, I thought. After plugging it in and firing up a little valve amp with some fuzz, I felt a manic grin spread across my face like some kind of voodoo priest in a juicebar. Instant snippets of the Stooges, Johnny Thunders, Joan Jett and Link Wray came zipping through my fingers.

It's a copy of a Gibson Melody Maker, most likely made by Avon, a company owned by Rose Morris (a popular musical outlet based in London's famous Denmark Street). Mike, the original owner, bought it sometime in the mid-'70s. He gouged out the weedy original single-coils and retro-fitted a Stratocaster single-coil in the neck position and that tasty DiMarzio in the bridge. He told me it had been sprayed a few colours in its time with the comings and goings of punk and new-wave trends. Luckily for me, it's now in my favourite Gibson-esque shade of Pelham Blue.

I suppose this is really just to say that junk-shop, bastardised cheap guitars are fun and can be had for very very little dinero. After a check-up and some new tuners (these ones are a little rusty) this thing will be as good as any American plank.

Paul B Connolly
via email

STRIKING A CHORD

I've been playing guitar for more years than I wish to remember (and one day I hope to get somewhere close to good) but I still love it. I'm a subscriber, but one section that I used to pay little attention to is the Lost Chord, which I now really like. In fact I now turn straight to it when I first

receive my new edition, and I particularly enjoy it when you link it in with information connecting the use of the chord in some very famous lick from Floyd or wherever, and it solves the mystery of how a particular sound is created.

I have recently started to cut out the Lost Chords and paste them into a book and am regretting not having done it earlier. Could you find it in your kind hearts to print a couple of pages of previous Lost Chords as a compilation? I'm sure many of your readers would like that... I certainly would.

Mal Bibby
via email

***G&B:* Pleased you've come onboard with the Lost Chord tribe – we've got badges. If you check out our website (www.guitarmagazine.co.uk) and click on the 'Tuition' button you'll see a selection of past Lost Chords. Hope that it's of some use to you all – just be sure to take a guitar along to work with you, as it's great way to pass a lunchtime.**

MORE FOR MOORE

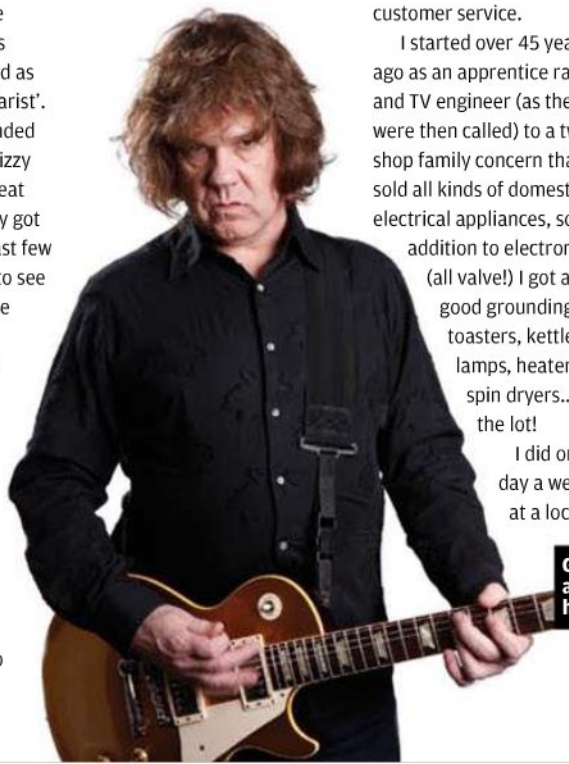
It was with great sadness that I learned of the premature passing of Gary Moore who in the news report I read was inadequately described as the 'ex-Thin Lizzy guitarist'.

Gary's talents extended way beyond his Thin Lizzy days and it is to my great regret that I only really got into his music in the last few years. I had intended to see him in concert when he next toured.

I have a substantial collection of GM CDs, but the only DVD I have is of his tribute to Jimi Hendrix at the Stratocaster Anniversary concert, where his facial expressions alone give us a clue to how crucial he felt it was to hit the right note and do the job properly. My favourite track of his was his cover of *Need Your Love So Bad* of Peter Green/Fleetwood Mac fame. I was pleased but not surprised to read in the *Guitar & Bass* article that he also felt this was one of his best works.

He was too young to die and will be greatly missed. Any further blues or rock guitar greats going to heaven will find it one hard gig to join with Gary, Jimi, Stevie Ray and Phil Lynott cranking up the amps to 12, to mention but a few who are no longer with us.

Jeff Parsons
via email



Gary Moore: 'His facial expressions alone give us a clue to how crucial he felt it was to hit the right note'

GUITAR GYM

BRAIN GYMNASTICS

Let's try some brain gymnastics with your finger dexterity. Place both hands down on the table and raise the little finger of the both hands; lower, then repeat with ring, middle, index and thumb. Now try little, thumb, ring, index then middle. Still quite easy, right? Keep practicing these routines until your speed increases.

Now, let's throw the brain a curve ball. Lift the little finger on the left hand and the thumb on the right hand, and follow along the hands so you then lift the left ring and right index, both middle fingers, left index and right ring, left thumb and right little finger. Next, reverse the sequence and go back along the fingers the other way. This one takes some practice to become proficient at, but it's great for training independence of the fingers... something which will really enhance your playing. Those who have been playing for a long time will probably find it easier than the novice player. Challenge your friends with this one.

Got a health issue that affects your playing? Marion Turner is a physio specialising in musicians' injuries. Write to us, and we'll get her on to it

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

I regret to say that the problems Kevin McKeown was experiencing in finding a valve amplifier technician (see *Star Letter*, March 2011 issue) are widespread – but these problems, in my opinion, are partly brought about by the customer in the modern world.

Everyone wants something cheap. We call it 'value for money', but in fact the last 20 years or so of the general trend towards 'pile 'em high and sell 'em cheap' has meant that in all areas of retail, business margins have been cut to the bone... and the first thing that the bean-counters tend to axe is customer service.

I started over 45 years ago as an apprentice radio and TV engineer (as they were then called) to a two-shop family concern that sold all kinds of domestic electrical appliances, so in addition to electronics (all valve!) I got a good grounding on toasters, kettles, lamps, heaters, spin dryers... the lot!

I did one day a week at a local technical college (and later in my own time and expense, a year at night school to learn colour TV).

Where are such stores now? There were about five or six in my town back then. They've been killed off by the big warehouse-style shops, but these stores would not have grown up but for the customer demanding ever lower prices and not caring or thinking about servicing in the future.

Dave
via email

***G&B:* While – as we discussed in the Feb cover feature – modern production has led to high quality gear at lower prices, we agree that it has led to a decline in the repair sector. Products are now 'disposable', but as many of us know there are times when we'd much rather have our old amp repaired than get a shiny new one. There's nothing wrong with getting value for money, but having the option to get something fixed up instead of just replaced should also be an important consideration. Gear repairers of the world, we salute you...**

EDITOR'S LETTER

The news regarding Gary Moore's sudden death came as a real shock. In the many conversations about Gary we've had since his passing, everyone we've talked to has expressed their fondness for him and his music. While a common theme has been admiration for the fire in his playing, as well as just the sheer quality of it, when the subject of favourite Gary Moore moments has come up, the broad spread of answers really brought home to us how long and varied his career really was.

Whether you prefer his time as a young gunslinger in Skid Row or Thin Lizzy, his later blues albums, or any of Gary's other musical adventures, you can't argue that the man put his heart and his soul into everything he did. Gary Moore's single-minded determination to pursue what he thought was right didn't always bring commercial success. However, it won him plenty of devotees among the guitar playing community and beyond. We hope our tribute on page 48 does him justice...

Enjoy the issue...

John Callaghan
EDITOR
www.guitarmagazine.co.uk

Woke Up This Mornin'...

Stop Look & Listen

Albums
Books
DVDs

Joe Bonamassa
Dust Bowl
(Provogue)

Thankfully the hackneyed vocal metre and lyrics of opener *Slow Train* are somewhat of a red herring, as *Dust Bowl* quickly gathers pace. John Hiatt guests on his co-write (with John Porter) *Tennessee Plates* and Bonamassa's own *Black Lung Heartache* with its folky spin comes as a refreshing surprise. Covers are thoroughly embraced too, with Black Country Communion pal Glenn Hughes lending a hand on Paul Rodgers' emotional *Heartbreaker*. Songs aside, Bonamassa's soloing skills are always a joy to behold.

Harry Manx
Isle Of Manx
(Dog My Cat)

Manx has hand-picked the cream of his 'mysticssippi' catalogue for this celebratory anthology. Melding Eastern voicings and Indian scales with the blues has blown acres of unexplored territory wide open, and the guitarist has evolved an enthrallingly other-worldy vibe as a result. For those unaware of his work, this is a fine introduction to 'indo-blues'.

New York Dolls
Dancing Backwards In High Heels
(Blast)

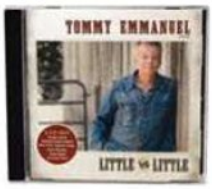
Streetcake opens with a suggestive leer and establishes the scene for this loose and groove-heavy return. The Dolls take *Exile*-era Stones and own it in *I'm So Fabulous*, and the lyrically led *You Don't Have To Cry* is a definite moment. A diverse mix of genres - Motown to ballad to sleazy rock'n'roll - proves they've still got it in droves.

J Mascis
Several Shades Of Why
(Sub Pop)

When Mascis' addictively languid slur joins the strummed-out intro of *Listen To Me*, we're instantly whisked back under his slacker's spell. The decision to remain staunchly

acoustic (no band) endows this with a charming fragility often hidden in his previous output, and his alt-guestlist adds weight. Sure, much of this set would sit perfectly with Dinosaur Jr (gain firmly on full), but we're glad he's done it and we won't stop going back.

Tommy Emmanuel
Little By Little
(Favored Nations)



Witnessing Emmanuel's unrivalled fingerstyle and radiant tone is a must for all acoustic fans. As ever, all of his digits work overtime to bring us a wide-ranging set of elegant, exploratory acoustic cuts, including some beautifully-arranged instrumental covers. The few occasions where a full band (featuring Victor Wooton) is called upon are welcome, but frankly, who cares when Emmanuel is quite simply as good as they come? Sleeve notes also show his chosen guitars on each track. Nice touch.

Snap Judgements

T-Model Ford & GravelRoad
Taledragger
(Alive Natural Sound)

Artful blues with more than one foot in the deepest Delta. GravelRoad back the authentic Ford with a fresh flavour; deep, delicious grooves and sweet storytelling.

James Walbourne
The Hill
(Heavenly)

Roomy, melodic and absorbing, the Pretenders/Son Volt guitarist's debut has well-crafted songs at its heart. Driving folk/rock/country, never overcooked.

Funeral For A Friend
Welcome Home Armageddon
(Distiller)

FFAF wanted a live flavour for their fifth and the result is a fiery stew combining all the elements that assured them an army of devotees... and they're sure to love it.

Buffalo Tom
Skins
(Scrawny)

14 tracks of classic Buffalo Tom are enough to give anyone's day an upward slant, and *Skins* is another generous portion. Oozing charm and as moving as ever.

De Staat
Machinery
(Cool Green/Mascot)

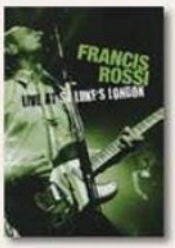
They call it psycho funk, and why not? De Staat major in a vivid, jolting kind of bedlam that is nothing short of genius. A first for us and we'll certainly keep listening.

Peter Finger
Flow
(Acoustic Music)

Beyond-inventive acoustic gems teeming with twists and turns that'll thrill your ears and calm your spirit. Finger's arrangements are a spellbinding knock-out.

DVDs

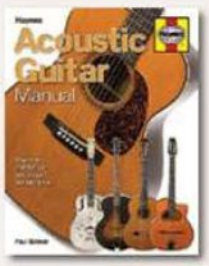
Francis Rossi
Live At St Luke's London
(Ear Music)



A great setting and a revved-up crowd provide a warm backdrop for Francis Rossi to step out alone. Immaculately played, the set mixes Quo faves with solo numbers, and it's a rollicking ride; Rossi picks out some tasty licks amongst his usual shuffles and the sound is clear and well mixed. The centrepiece is his album's title track *One Step At A Time* with its sweet sincerity and hooky refrain, and by the time a sweat-drenched Rossi waves goodbye we're smiling from ear to ear. Bonus feature: a delightful interview, with Rossi at his cheeky-chappy best. A fun DVD.

Books

Haynes Acoustic Guitar Manual
Paul Balmer
(Haynes)



You prize your acoustic, enjoy its crystal clear tones, handle it with utmost care - but, be honest: when was the last time you gave it the once over? Now's your chance. Paul Balmer is at your disposal to offer expert advice on returning your acoustic to tip-top condition. With tips on buying your perfect guitar, set up, maintenance, repairs and fine-tuning, no stone is left unturned. On top of that are 13 fascinating case studies, from a Maccaferri stunner to a Lloyd Loar Gibson L-5. Yours is soon to be one lucky acoustic.

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From the latest in high-tech guitars to handmade acoustics, from monster valve stacks to tiny practice amps, NAMM is the showcase for what the future holds in the business of making music. Guitar & Bass has all the news

20 Electrics
28 Amps
32 Acoustics
38 Effects
41 Recording
42 Bass Gear

FENDER

Telebration Time

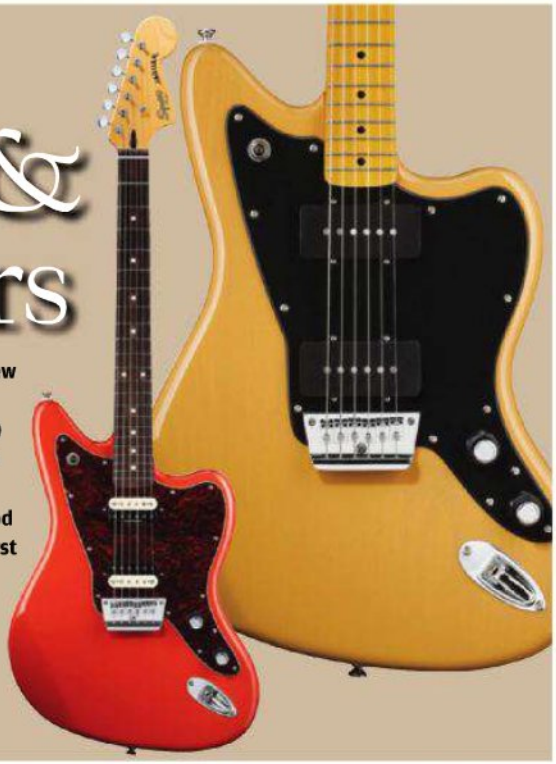
Six decades of twang certainly deserves a fanfare, and champagne corks were popping over at the Fender booth for the unveiling of the 60th Anniversary Tele (£1415). It's a dashing blackguard with a blonde finish, but the resemblance to the Tele of 60 years ago pretty much ends there; specs-wise it's closer to an American Standard with American Vintage single-coils, a C-shaped neck with a 9.5" fingerboard radius and medium jumbo frets. A commemorative chrome neck plate ups the collectibility stakes.

More Road Worns too, with the introduction of the Player Series and Player Series HSS. All have alder bodies, lightly-aged finishes, worn maple necks and distressed knobs. The standard Strat (£1018) comes with Texas Special single-coils, a maple fretboard and a choice of olympic white or two-tone sunburst. The HSS version (also £1018) is identical but has a rosewood fretboard, a Duncan humbucker at the bridge and a slightly jazzier look. We're tempted by the Tele with a Tex-Mex single-coil at the bridge and a Duncan '59 at the neck, particularly the candy apple red

with black scratchplate (top right). Also a big draw was a Strat for the MC5's Wayne Kramer (£910), replicating the star-spangled axe that soundtracked his liberal leanings ('This Tool Kills Hate' is engraved on its neckplate). Custom Shop highlights included the Closet Classics Pine Strat Pro (£2615, above) built from 100-year-old pine, with a tinted quartersawn maple neck, Master Design pickups and tasty finish options.

SQUIER

Mods & Rockers



SQUIER showed off its seductive new Vintage Modified models. The basswood-bodied Jaguar HH (£335) is primed to rock with dual Duncan Designed Zebra humbuckers, two Jazz Bass 'stacked' knobs, rosewood fingerboard and a choice of sunburst or fiesta red. For a lighter touch the Jazzmaster (also £335) shares similar features but has two fat Alnico 5 Duncan Designed single-coils, an alder body and maple fingerboard. Bargain.

FRAMUS

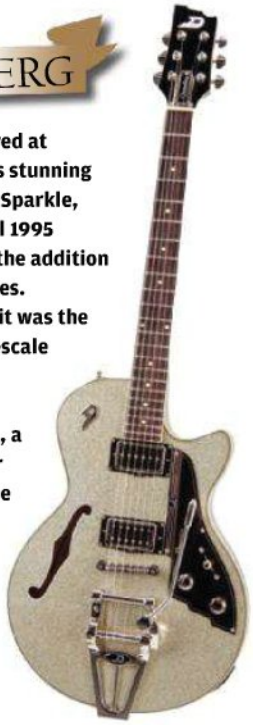
Airline-esque styling from FRAMUS for its Earl Slick signature (£2379). A swamp ash body houses a choice of pickups (PAFs or P90s) and it's finished in satin red with cream binding on top. The similar-looking Vintage Hollywood is available in single or double cutaway with single coils and comes in an awful lot cheaper, starting at just £699.

DANELECTRO

Wild Child

Characteristically off-the-wall, **DANELECTRO** revealed its cartoonistic Wild Things – complete with swooping curves and distinctive Dano quirks. They're available as guitars, baritones or basses (around £380) and come with lipstick pickups, concentric pots with colour-matching knobs and some unapologetic finish options. The unique body shape isn't for everyone, but they certainly caused a steady stream of rubbernecking at the booth.

DUESENBERG



Crying out to be played at **DUESENBERG** was its stunning Star Player III Silver Sparkle, based on the original 1995 Starplayer but with the addition of nice glam flourishes. Launched alongside it was the equally fetching 15"-scale Mando Guitar with a knockout black and white colour scheme, a maple neck, an alder body, fully adjustable 12-string bridge and 'toaster' pickups.

GRETSCH

GRETSCH's new G6128T-GH George Harrison Tribute Custom Shop Duo Jet (£1500) is based on his 'first really decent guitar' from the Beatles' Cavern Club days. Created by master builder Stephen Stern, it has a chambered mahogany body, rosewood fretboard, two Dynasonic single-coil pickups, vintage-style 'rocking bar' bridge and a modified B6C Bigsby tailpiece. It comes with two unreleased photos, a DVD, a rare 7" and one of his picks. Only 60 to be made.

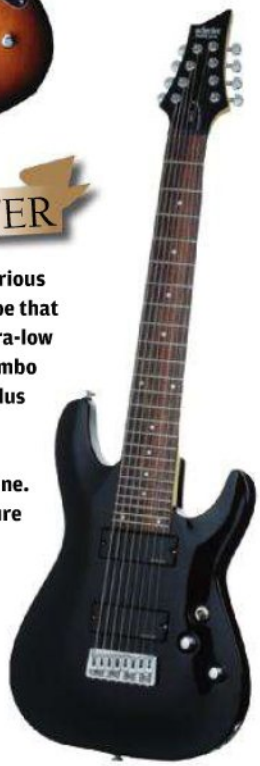
YAMAHA

YAMAHA introduced the next wave of Pacifica guitars with the PA120H (£270). Fitted with two open-coil humbuckers, it has a hardtail bridge and a tasteful variety of finishes including a discerning tobacco brown sunburst. New additions to the SG range, too – the delicious (and expensive) Flame Top SG1820 LTD HB and CG.

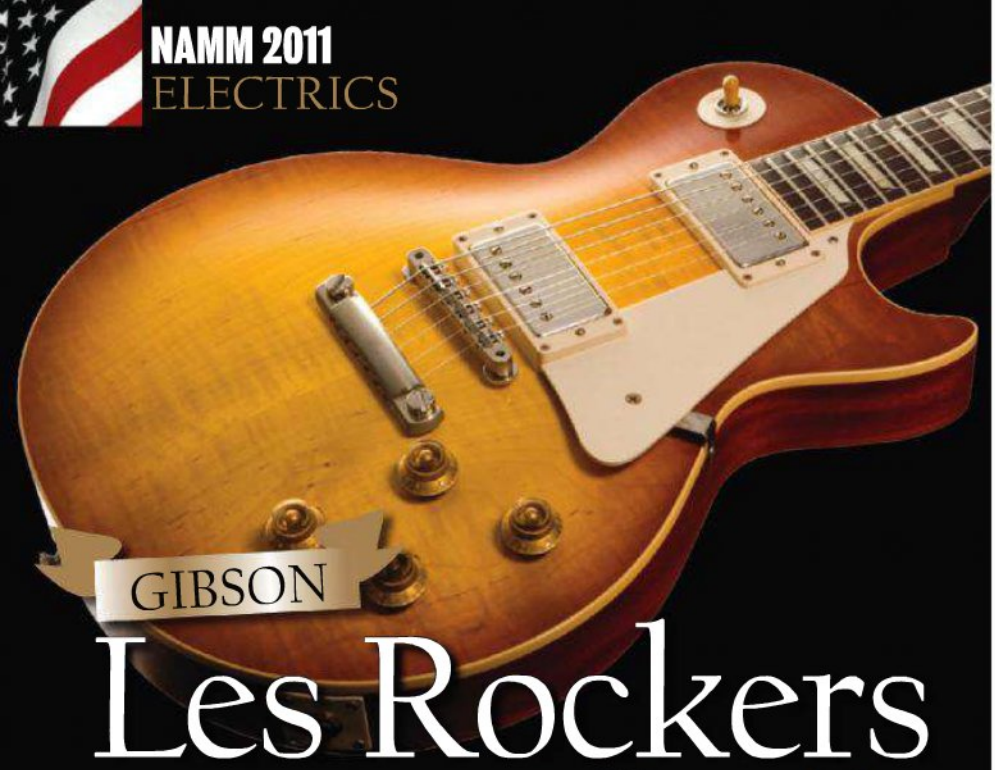
VOX

VOX decided to do its bit to ease the financial strain on guitar lovers with the Series 22, a range of bat-like beauties. Taking design cues from the same flagship Virage range that gave us the much-touted Series 55, these guitars feature double-cutaway mahogany bodies finished with a classy 3D contour, Vox-designed XLM (Extra Loud Mini) humbuckers, inverse heel joints for easy upper fret access and lightweight MaxConnect aluminium bridges.

SCHECTER



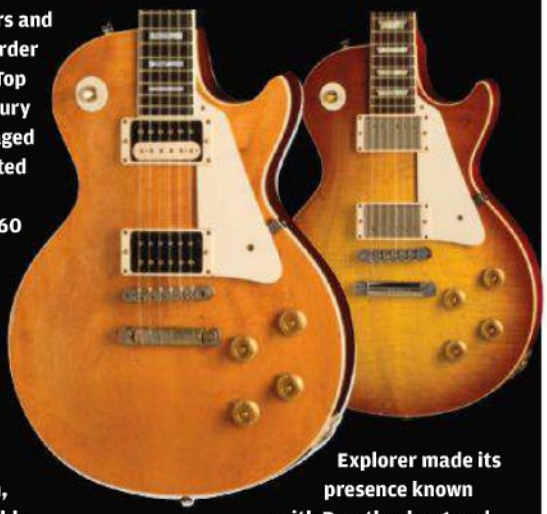
Despite needing a serious fretting hand to probe that fingerboard, the extra-low strings (F#/B), 24 jumbo frets and Diamond Plus pickups make the **SCHECTER** Omen-8 (£349) a grind machine. The Pete Dee signature with custom 'Adicts' inlay added punk spirit and the TSH-1 balanced things up with retro charm and SuperRock MH pickups.



GIBSON

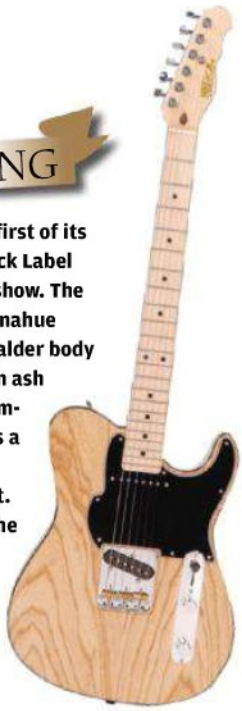
Les Rockers

Tributes, Les Pauls, metal guitars and a futuristic Firebird were the order of the day at Gibson this year. Top tributes on show included a 20th Century toy, the Mark Bolan Les Paul (£3699, aged version £5799), pictured right, recreated with a lush 'Bolan Chablis' finish and open-coil humbuckers; the Clapton 1960 Les Paul (above), which mirrors the hallowed 'Beano Burst' original with repro PAFs and full VOS treatment (£4499, aged £7499); and the Don Felder Hotel California (£5199, aged £6999) which is a spit for Felder's '59. It was a veritable LP-fest, with prime movers including the Alex Lifeson with Floyd Rose, the BFG Trem, the all-black Gothic Morte (also available as SG, both in the £1000 bracket), the Anniversary Flood with Blue Swirl finish and the comic book Beano Artwork model. For those who favour the hard stuff, the Dethlok Explorer made its presence known with Burstbucker 1 and 2 pickups and Silverburst finish. Lastly, the gadget-packed Firebird X (£3299) continued to divide opinion, boldly going where no guitar has gone (or should go?) before. Great stuff.



FRET-KING

FRET-KING aired the first of its new name-player Black Label series guitars at the show. The Fret-King JD Jerry Donahue (about £600) has an alder body with black binding, an ash veneer top and custom-wired single-coils; it's a fitting axe for the string-bending expert. Also on display was the Matt Smith Matt-Matic, a self-tuning semi hollow-body with three pickups.



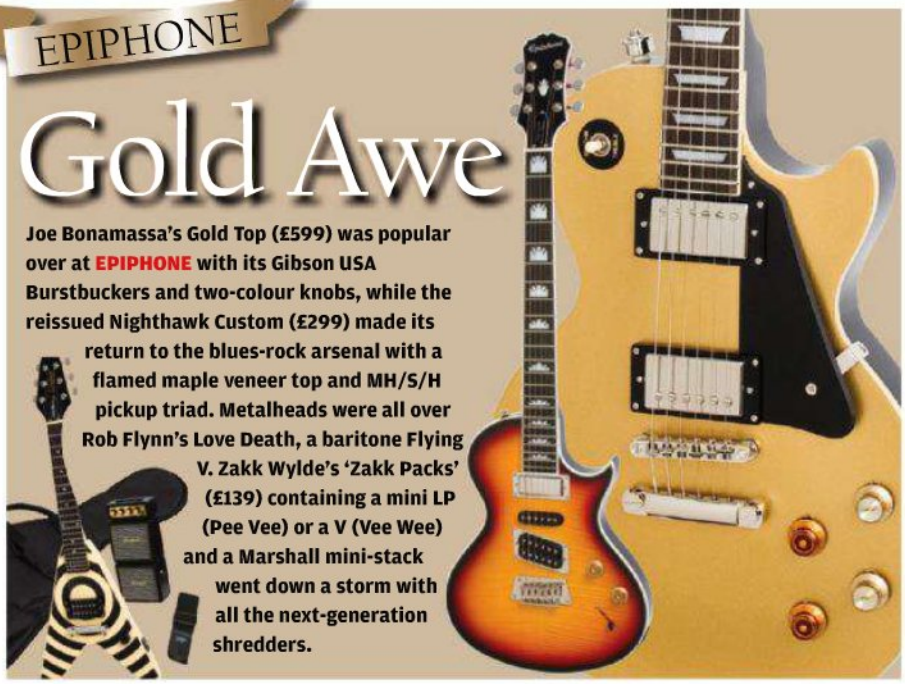
HAGSTROM

HAGSTROM added to its range with two sleek numbers, the Deuce (£520) and Deuce F (£536), both upgrades of the Super Swede model. We liked the look of the semi-hollow Viking Rex Tone armed with the same Custom 58 pickups for a nice vintage tone. Lastly, keep 'em peeled for the slim-bodied Swedie fitted with ballsy Custom 62 pickups and a three-way tone filter switch.

EPIPHONE

Gold Awe

Joe Bonamassa's Gold Top (£599) was popular over at **EPIPHONE** with its Gibson USA Burstbuckers and two-colour knobs, while the reissued Nighthawk Custom (£299) made its return to the blues-rock arsenal with a flamed maple veneer top and MH/S/H pickup triad. Metalheads were all over Rob Flynn's Love Death, a baritone Flying V. Zakk Wylde's 'Zakk Packs' (£139) containing a mini LP (Pee Vee) or a V (Vee Wee) and a Marshall mini-stack went down a storm with all the next-generation shredders.



MUSIC MAN

MUSIC MAN stepped up with the trailblazing Reflex Gamechanger that allows up to 250,000 pickup combinations while remaining 100 per cent analogue. This canny system affords a staggering choice of tones (any order of single coil or humbucker in series, parallel or out-of-phase) that can be saved and shared. Friendly on the eyes, as well.

Sound, Sophistication and Individuality

Sound, Craftsmanship and Accuracy

Sound, Comfort and Efficiency

Vigier

Since 1980

Exclusive features of Vigier guitars:

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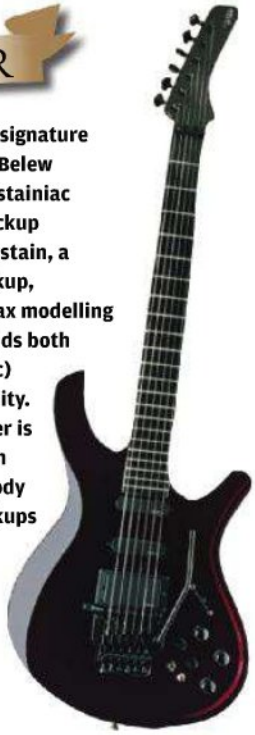
PRS

Studio Line

With over 30 new models on the stand, PRS is definitely earning its keep this year. As well as updating the Custom 24, DGT and Santana SE, the company has brought a stylish new 22-fret Studio model into the fold (£2999, above right) with two 57/08 Narrowfield pickups and a humbucker, a five-way switch, 2011 bird inlays, lampshade knobs and multiple finish choices. If you're after great value, check out the new mahogany-bodied SE245 with a maple top. The high-end has been tended to with more sumptuous Private Stocks to feast your blinkers on: the Signature Limited Run (above left) is PRS's first 'multi-endorsee' instrument and includes a new pickup system, a limited maple top, 'sinker' mahogany neck and Modern Eagle birds with brown MOP centres, while the semi-hollow Private Stock Dweezil Zappa (left) with its unique mandolin-inspired body shape and treble/bass clef fingerboard inlays shows that PRS is not scared to stray from the norm. Not content with new models alone, PRS has performed an overhaul of finishes, pickups, bridges, tuners and neck shapes in the quest for perfection.

PARKER

PARKER's first-ever signature guitar is the Adrian Belew (pictured) with a Sustainiac Stealth PRO neck pickup providing infinite sustain, a DiMarzio bridge pickup, onboard Line 6 Variax modelling (with 25 preset sounds both acoustic and electric) and MIDI compatibility. Also new from Parker is the Vernon Reid with garish hand-done body graphics, EMG X pickups and a Floyd Rose, and the slick sunburst Maxfly DF824 model.



WASHBURN

WASHBURN is adding three new limited edition beauties to the Nuno Bettencourt N-series; the N4Walnut (pictured left), N4Korina and N4Koa (from £2799). All have angled reversed headstocks, Stephens Extended Cutaways, a Seymour Duncan '59 and a Bill Lawrence L-500. The three woods on offer deliver different but classy looks and tonal properties to match your needs.

ESP

Heavy Lifting

Metal mayhem from ESP, with Metallica, Slayer and Max Cavalera signatures all at NAMM. The James Hetfield Snakebytes feature a new body style and 22 XJ frets, the KH-2 SE Kirk Hammetts have an evil Metallic Greenburst finish and green pearloid skull inlays, and the Slayer Reign In Blood 25th Anniversary axe sports a custom graphic and logo at the 12th fret. Lastly, the Max Cavalera EX is an urban-camo thrash metal monster.

REVEREND

REVEREND showed off its Rick Vito Signature prototypes, available in a modish oceanside green or a black finish. These art deco-inspired stunners have a solid korina body housing a Reverend custom Dual-Pro bridge pickup based on a Supro single coil from the 1960s, a P90 style pickup at the neck, an ebony fingerboard and 22 large jumbo frets. Get in!

Jesse Hughes
Eagles Of Death Metal

Simon Neil
Biffy Clyro

Dan Hoerner
Sunny Day Real Estate

Dave Catching
Eagles Of Death Metal

MOFO

ONE HOT MUTHA

From spanking clean tones through rich and responsive crunch to full-blown high-gain mayhem, the Hayden MoFo does it all. Visit the new Hayden MoFo website and discover the all-valve 30-Watt guitar amp head that Biffy Clyro's Simon Neil describes as 'a real mother******.

NEW

MINI MOFO

ALL THE ATTITUDE, HALF THE POWER

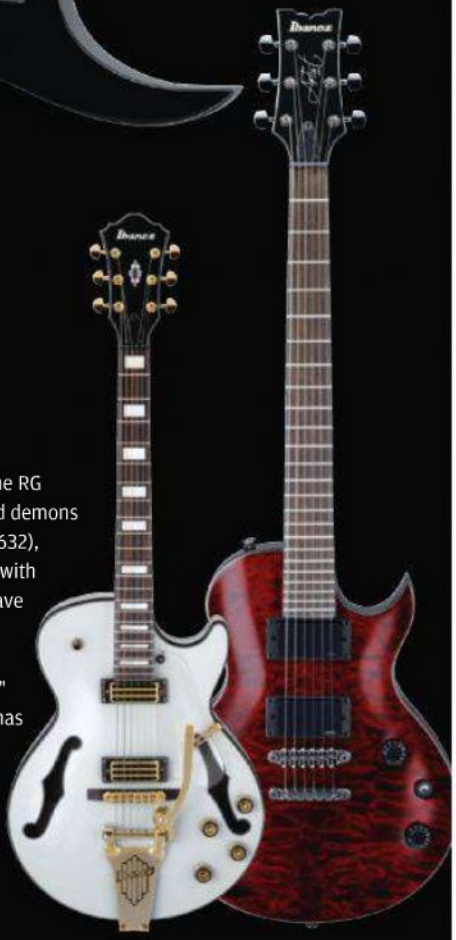
Fuelled by a pair of EL84 valves, the new Mini MoFo serves up the classic MoFo recipe of tone, versatility and attitude in a 15-Watt head.

Hayden

haydenamps.com

IBANEZ

Back In Black

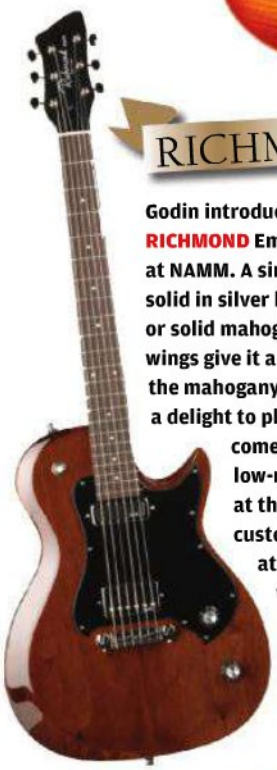


A string of varied models at the Ibanez stand. The RG Premium series consists of two top-spec speed demons – the smooth black basswood RG870 above (£632), armed with high-output pickups, and the RG920QM with quilted maple top and DiMarzio IBZ pickups. Both have five-piece maple and walnut lizard premium necks, rounded frets and Edge Zero II Tremolos. Next, the ARZ series is more shredder's fare with set-neck, 25" scale length and 24 frets. The 800 (£626, far right) has a quilted maple top and mahogany back; the 307 is their first single-cut arched-top 7-string; and the all-mahogany 400 has EMG-HZs. Some glitzy hollow-bodied numbers, too – the rockabilly AFS (near right) with Dual ACH humbuckers and the jazzy AGR series (from £376) with mahogany set neck, ACH-M mini humbuckers and '50s looks.

VIGIER

In only two short years the GV model has become VIGIER's best-selling guitar, so we were delighted to try its luxurious new special edition version. This lightweight GV Wood has a refined flamed maple top, the neck and back are made from ultra-rare Honduras mahogany and the two hand-wound Amber humbuckers are controlled by a five-way switch.

RICHMOND



Godin introduced the new RICHMOND Empire to its fleet at NAMM. A single-cutaway solid in silver leaf maple body or solid mahogany with poplar wings give it a retro feel, and the mahogany Ergocut neck is a delight to play. Pickups come in the form of a low-noise single coil at the neck and a custom humbucker at the bridge. It won't dent your savings much, either.

MISA

No Strings

Possibly more suited to a Tron convention than NAMM, MISA's Kitara digital guitar takes futuristic one step beyond. Its fretboard consists of six buttons on each of the 24 frets – standard fingerings – and you can virtually strum or pick its touch screen. An onboard digital synth opens up a huge library of sounds and effects, and as it's MIDI compatible the possibilities really are endless. Who needs strings?

TAYLOR

TAYLOR has gone double-cut with the SolidBody Standard. A 'customisable' format means you can choose a fixed bridge or vibrato, any of nearly a dozen pickup configurations (including high-gain and high-definition humbuckers and vintage or silent single-coils) and select from a wealth of new finishes, including Borrego Red, Tiger's Eye and Gold Rush.

NEW MODEL
Starplayer III Sparkle
Duesenberg
Guitars for Heroes
NEW MODEL
Starplayer III Black
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In the North contact 440 Distribution on info@440distribution.co.uk - or call 01132 589599.
Brilliant

Anglo American

VOX

The all-valve TB35C1 (£1127) and TB35C2 (£1379) from **VOX** mark a collaboration with boutique amp designer Tony Bruno. The basic idea is to offer a high-end US-voiced sound rather than the classic beat boom tone that Vox has always been known for. One of the combos is a 1x12" and the other's a 2x12" but otherwise they're the same, with four 6V6 output valves, a triple-12AX7 front end, a fully valve-driven Accutronics reverb and Celestion G12-65s. There's also a 'Macho' mids/boost switch and a master volume bypass for oodles of sound. Interesting!

The shiny little lunchbox-sized Night Train now has an impressive big brother, the Night Train 50 (£659, pictured left). All-valve again, it's got two channels - Bright, taken straight from the little NT15H, and Girth, which adds an extra 12AX7 for more crunch. Two EL34s give 50W of output, and footswitchable Tight and Thick modes offer extra variations. It's paired with the V212NT cab (£419) armed with two Celestion G12s.

FInally, the Valvetronix line has expanded with the VT+ Series, all boasting extra models, effects, presets and power. There's a new Power Level control, 33 amp models with 99 factory presets, and 25 onboard effects for multiple possibilities. There are four VT+ amps: the 1x8" VT20+ (£156), the 1x10" VT40+ (£204), the 1x12" VT80+ (£342), and the 2x12" VT120+ (£450).

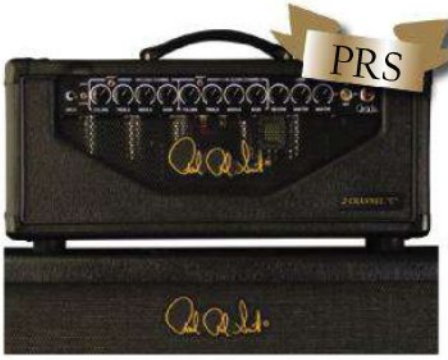
ORANGE

If you liked the TH30 from ORANGE then you'll go bananas for the TH100 (£840). It's got the same preamp and controls and has two sparkly clean or full-on overdrive channels based on those from the Rocker and TH series, but when running in class AB1 it'll chuck out 35W on two of its EL34 output valves and 70W on four. Click the switch to full power or class AB2 and it'll provide 50W on two tubes and a very considerable 100W on all four. They were also showing the OPC, which looks like an amp but is a very clever computer/amplifier/speaker.

KEMPER

Not only does the KEMPER Music Profiling virtual amp come loaded with classic amp sims, but it also claims to 'learn' and reproduce any amp you show it - all within a matter of 20 seconds or so. This could be rather large news in recording land. No prices have been announced, but watch this space.

PRS



PRS were showing two differently-voiced 50W amplifiers. The 2-Channel C is designed for 'aggressive vintage tones' via a Cinemag transformer and two EL34 output valves, while the 2-Channel H promises a more modern 'in your face' tone through Heyboer transformers and two 6L6s. The C comes in a combo version, or you can match either head with the deep DB-2 speaker cabinet with Celestion Vintage 30s.

BOGNOR

With delicious art deco go-faster styling, the 25W footswitchable BOGNOR Mephisto is like two amps crammed into a single box, with one side driven by two 6V6s and the other powered by two EL84s - and they're fully blendable. Also new is the weeny Panama head, which uses two 6V6s to produce a mere 4W but with a horse-load of gain on tap.

MARSHALL

'Vintage look and sound with incredible versatility and features' is how neo-classical rocker Yngwie Malmsteen sums up his new **MARSHALL** YJM100 head (£1515). It's based on the famous 1959 model 100W plexi but is modified with a half-power switch for 50W operation, an infinitely variable attenuator to take the output stage right down to the merest whisper, and four footswitchable extras: a boost with controls for Volume and Gain on the rear panel, a noise gate, a high-quality digital reverb and a series FX loop.

PEAVEY

Latest in the time-honoured **PEAVEY** TransTube line is the loud and solid Special 212. It comes with an all-new 100W output section, Clean and Lead channels with individual three-band EQs for each, analogue chorus with rate and depth controls, spring reverb, a footswitchable boost and two 12" Blue Marvel speakers. At a gig near you soon.

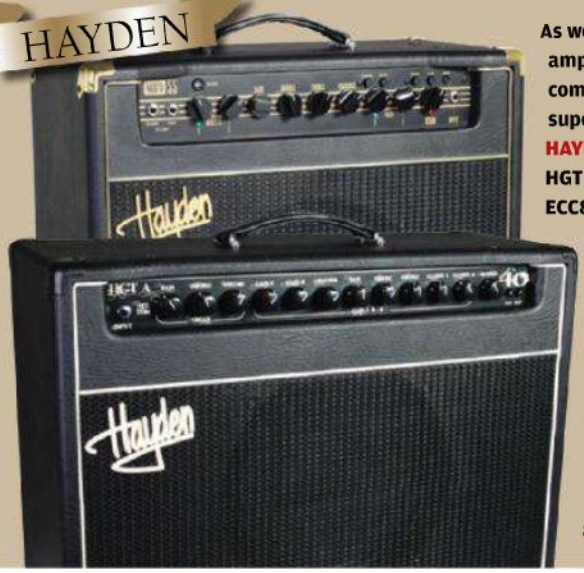
DIGITECH

From hi-tech boxes to amps: the **DIGITECH** TH-150 (top right) is a purposeful twin-channel 100W all-valve head with a matching 4x12" cab. There are three solid-state Classic combos, too, plus a brand-new family of three very modern-looking Fusion modelling amps (below right). The 75XD and 150XD have 24 amp models and 24 effects, while the smallest 30XD halves the models but still comes with a 20-second looper. All have a single 12" speaker and a built-in tuner.

65 AMPS

The Empire from **65 AMPS** is their ultimate Brit-voiced head, with 22W from two 6V6s that somehow sound spookily like EL34s. It's got three footswitchable voices: Townshend clean, fat'n'dirty '68-'72-style, and hot-rodded '80s. Their Master Voltage feature tames the rage for recording purposes, and there's a selection of cabs with Celestions.

HAYDEN



As well as announcing extra MoFo amps including the MoFo 55 combo (pictured top) and a super-poky MoFo 100 head, **HAYDEN** also unveiled the all-new HGT range. All models have three ECC83s in the preamp stage; the 20W head and combo use two EL84s for the output, while the 40W HGT-A40 (below left) and matching head use a pair of EL34s. There are three channels to give everything from cleans to Brit crunch to US-style overload, plus digital reverb, a fully controllable FX loop and lots more.

DV MARK

The Frank Gambale Combo 112, designed with the famed Aussie guitarist, is just one of a number of new amps from **DV MARK**. This solid-state combo puts out 150W of clean power and includes a Tube Drive channel and an Accutronics spring reverb. There's also the Gambale Pre, a one-rack preamp with three channels and programmable effects.

MESA BOOGIE

Ocean Waves

The **MESA/BOOGIE** Royal Atlantic head (£2400), the latest and most formidable of the Transatlantic line, socks out 100W of Anglo-centric sound thanks to an EL34-or-6L6 power stage and two channels with three footswitchable modes. Not only that, but each channel has Mesa's latest Multi-Soak power attenuator giving five output choices – again, all footswitchable – from 100W down to a mere 3W. Add Vintage Lo-Gain and Vintage Hi-Gain modes, spring reverb and ample EQ capabilities and you've got an amp to reckon with.

Rather less hefty but no less formidable is the TA-30 (pic left), which follows in the footsteps of the original Transatlantic TA-15 but adds lots more power, a welcome reverb and a useful effects loop. Two channels – one with two footswitchable modes, the other with three – aim to offer the best in both UK and US-flavoured sounds. Each channel also gives you no less than three power choices, so you can match your power and preamp needs to put the exact amount of drive at just about any level right under your toes. The TA-30 comes in three forms: as a head (£1879), as a compact 1x12" combo (£2000), or as a capable and most likely room-vibrating 2x12" combo (£2200).

FENDER

The 100W FENDER Mustang III 1x12" combo (£286), the 150W 2x12" Mustang IV (£430) and 150W Mustang V head (£287) expand the modelling line with 100 presets, 37 effects and a ton of controllability. Also new are Blues, Metal and Country special-edition versions of the G-Dec Thirty (all £382), with presets written by heroes of each genre.

BLACKSTAR

BLACKSTAR is adding to the Series One range with the S1-50 head – 50W, 2xEL34, Clean (with Warm/Bright modes) and OD (with Crunch/Super Crunch modes) channels – and the S1-104EL34 and more metal-orientated S1-1046L6, which employ different output tubes but both offer 100W, Clean, Crunch and two overdrive channels. Choices, choices.

LANEY

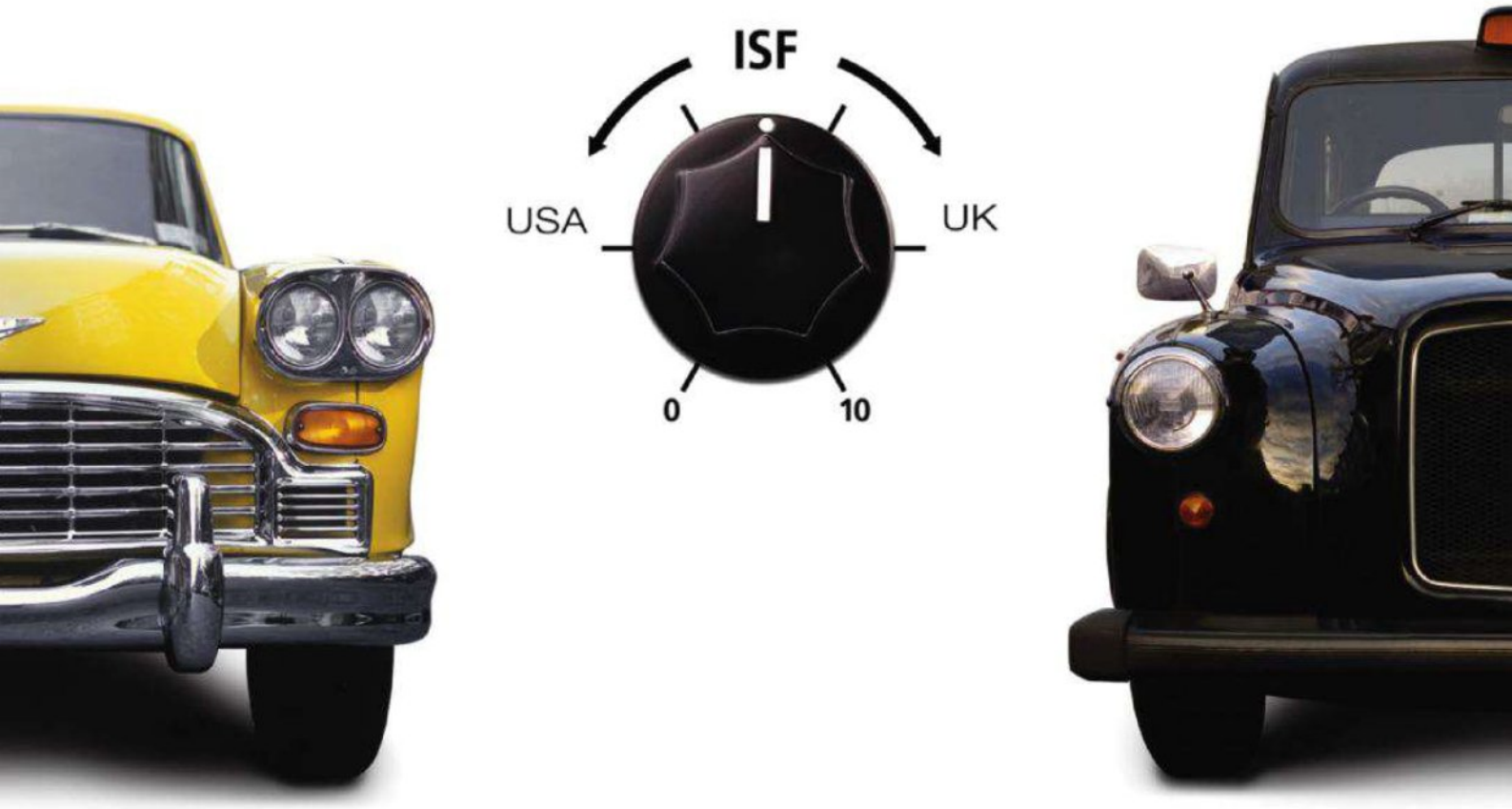
Iron Maiden

Metalheads, LANEY has your needs specifically in mind with the mean Ironheart head, available in 60W (what are you, chicken?) and 120W (ah, that's better) versions. Fronted by new gothic metal grilles, these moody new amps come – naturally enough – with two channels, each one with Drive, three-band EQ and Volume, plus four shared controls: an overall Tone, Reverb, a power-reducing Watts dial and an Enhance control, the latter tightening up the response for when you're trading in terminal levels of gain.

RANDALL

There's nothing wrong with solid-state, not according to RANDALL. The 40th Anniversary RG8040 combo, based on the old R80 of yore, chucks out 75W of old-school power through a new 100W 12" Diavlo speaker. It's got an FET preamp, Clean and Distortion channels and a 'secret' boost function for the brave and/or earplug-owning. The price? Just £249.

US to UK in seconds



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MARTIN

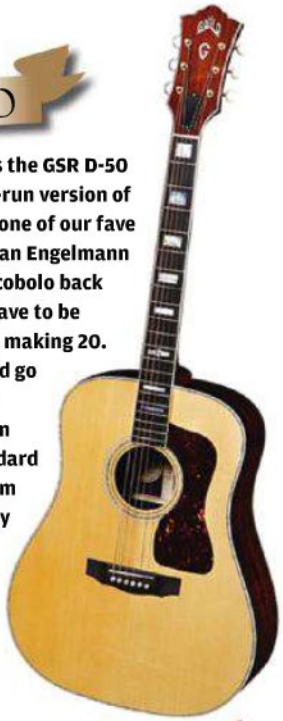
Kings Of Leon

A real showstopper was unveiled by **MARTIN** – the Da Vinci Unplugged with a Mona Lisa scrimshaw-decorated headstock, a Vitruvian Man back and a Last Supper pickguard. It's a fittingly gob-smacking model to mark the 1,500,000th Martin guitar. Back on terra firma, they're expanding the practical electro-acoustic Performing Artist line (£2150-£3300) with the gloss-top DCPA4, GPCPA4 and OMCPA4 in solid sapele and sitka spruce, plus the CGCPA Mahogany (shown above left), all with extra-comfy necks and Fishman F1 Analog preamps. For real quality timber in an electro-acoustic, check out the GPC-42E Amazon Rosewood with its Adirondack top and Fishman F1 Aura system.

Rare wood fans will also be thrilled by the D-45 Authentic (top right) in Brazilian rosewood with red spruce top and all hot hide glue construction, non-adjustable neck rod and all the other vintage goodies. The price? If you need to ask...

More news includes the return of the slope-shoulder dread in the form of the CEO-6 in red spruce and Indian rosewood, and the appearance of two highly distinctive models for Pete Seeger which echo a custom guitar built by luthier Stan Francis of Liverpool. The six-string JSO! and 12-string J12SO! Pete Seeger Sing Out! models have Martin's Grand Jumbo bodies in sitka and Indian rosewood with a triangular soundhole, and numbers are limited to 120 apiece.

GUILD



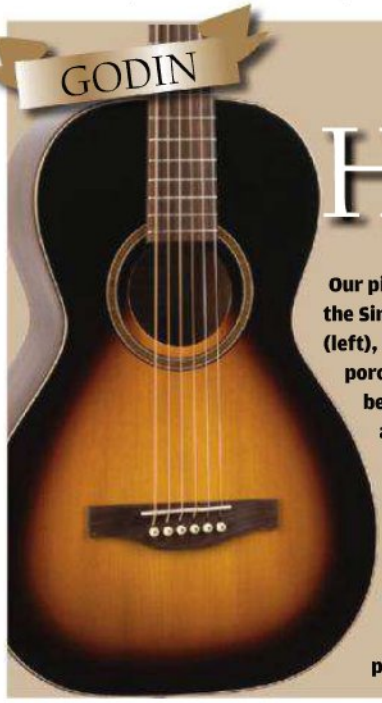
New from GUILD is the GSR D-50 (£2423), a limited-run version of the D-50 – always one of our fave strummers – with an Engelmann spruce top and cocobolo back and sides. You'll have to be swift; they're only making 20. It's also plug in and go time with six new electro cutaways in the US-made Standard Series guitars (from £1810), powered by the 18v D-TAR Wave-Length pickup system.

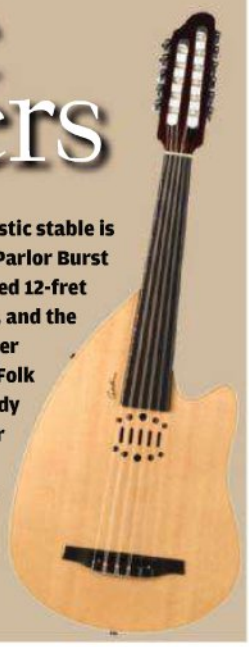
OVATION

The latest OVATIONs include the high-end deep-body Adamas I GT (left), the slimmer Adamas II GT, and the Adamas WT with solid spruce top. The Custom Elite AX, Elite AX, Custom Legend AX and Legend AX are nice-price introductions, and the Elite TX D-Scale is a black 28.3"-scale baritone tuned a whole step down and stage-equipped with the OCP-1K pickup and OP Pro preamp.

GODIN

Tree Huggers





Our pick from the 2011 GODIN acoustic stable is the Simon & Patrick Woodland Pro Parlor Burst (left), a tempting little '30s-flavoured 12-fret porch-picker with a sunburst top, and the better-spec'ed and slightly larger all-solid wood Woodland Pro Folk Burst with 14 frets to the body and a slotted headstock. For brave musical explorers there's the Godin MultiOud (right) an 11-string electro-acoustic fretless oud with both a bridge pickup and a microphone.

FISHMAN

Larry FISHMAN says the new Black Stack is 'a salute to a traditional well-known pickup that was around in the '70s and '80s.' Ah, so that'll be a Sunrise, then. This is Fishman's first-ever magnetic soundhole pickup with adjustable polepieces, and since it weighs rather more than most other units it also comes with an unpluggable pro-grade jack so you can safely remove it for travelling. It'll give you a grittier, bluesier, rockier kind of sound than Fishman's active pickups.

YAMAHA

Class A

A whole range from YAMAHA is pretty big news. The eight A Series electro-acoustics come in two body styles, dreadnought and concert, with solid mahogany or solid rosewood backs and sides. The four A1s have the System 66 pickup and a simple Yamaha preamp, while the four A3s (like the AC3M-NT, right) have the System 63 SRT pickup plus an improved preamp with vintage mic modelling. All come with cutaways and slimline necks, and prices range from £549-£649 for the A1s to £789-£889 for the A3s. More new Yamahas include three new APX models, the APX500II (£299), APX700II (£509) and APX1000-SRT (£799); three matching CPX cutaway jumbos (£339-£839) with corresponding pickup specs; and two versions of the skeletal Silent Guitar, the SLG110 and SLG130NW, with a new preamp.

TRACE ELLIOT

A hearty welcome for three updated acoustic guitar amps from TRACE ELLIOT, the TA-300 (1x12" + 2x5"), TA-200 (200W, 4x5") and TA-100 (100W, 2x5"). Lighter than ever before thanks to neo speakers, these new amps have two channels, auto-compression and a bunch of DSP effects including chorus, flanger, phaser, tremolo, and various delays with separately-controlled reverb, a six-band graphic EQ and lots more besides.

PEAVEY

Now that Composite Acoustics are being made by PEAVEY in their Meridian plant, we UK players can finally get to try them for ourselves. There are just three to begin with: the grand auditorium GX (above), now with a slimmer, improved neck; the medium-bodied OX; and the compact Cargo with its offset soundhole. They're handsome lookers, the heelless necks make them a whizz to play, and they'll shrug off extreme heat and humidity without a care.

TAKAMINE

Our pick of TAKAMINE's 2011 crop is the sunburst EG630S-VV parlour (£442) pictured. Equally cute are the NEX-shape Takamini series, there's a NEX EG430S-VV (£431) and cutaway NEX EG444C-VV (£454). The 2011 Ltd guitar is the 'iki' (£2339), a jumbo with lavish 'goldfish' inlay, while the TF360SBG-MAG Tradesman (£3359) guns for the bluegrassers with a red spruce top and Madagascar rosewood back/sides.

WASHBURN

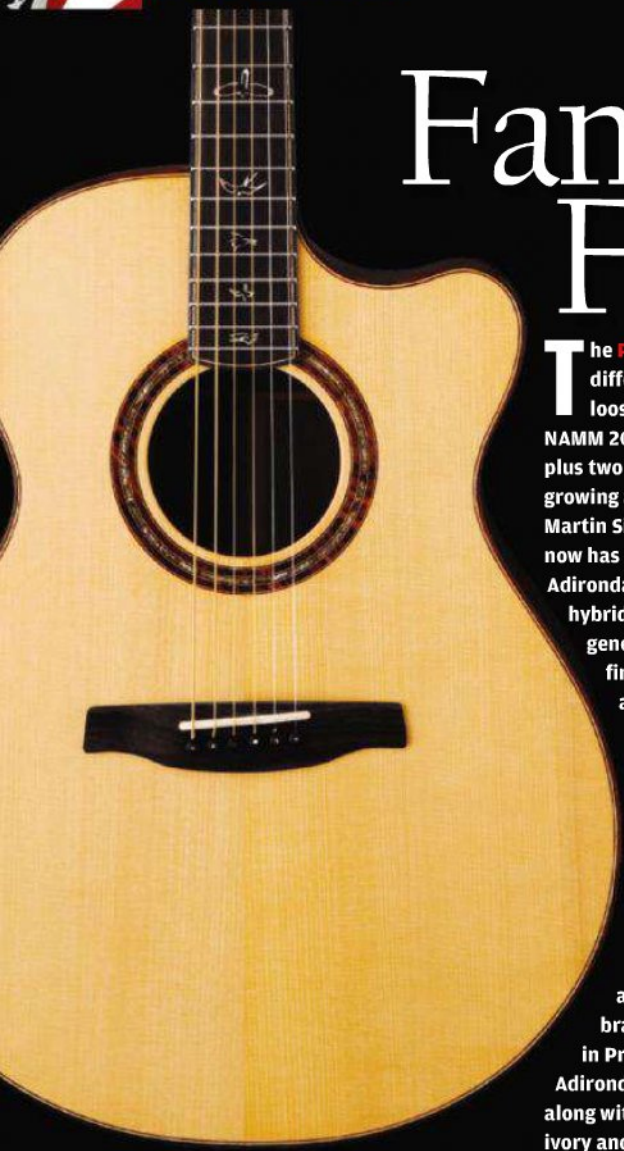
The WASHBURN Solid Wood line-up looks promising, with classical models and steel string acoustics such as the spruce/rosewood WD25OSW (above). Tops are spruce or cedar, backs and sides are mahogany, rosewood or ovankol, and the dreadnoughts have rosewood bridges and fingerboards and mahogany or rosewood body binding. The Washburn Solid Wood Series will be available as standard versions or as cutaways with Fishman Presys+ 501T electronics. They'll be in the UK around late spring, with prices ranging from £459 to £649.

TAYLOR

The TAYLOR DDX Doyle Deluxe fits alongside the company's 200 Series, so it's pretty affordable. It's got a grand auditorium body with laminated maple back and sides, a solid sitka top and a gloss black finish. Like the DDSM Doyle Dykes it has Chet Atkins fretboard inlays, but it's got a 25.5" scale and a 1 11/16" nut and comes with the ES-T pickup and a full Expression System. Available this spring at £1119.

PRS

Famous Faces



The PRS acoustics really are something different: we think they sound loud, loose, bright and open from the get-go. NAMM 2011 saw the debut of two new models, plus two signature guitars that underline a growing acceptance among top-flight players. Martin Simpson, one of the UK's very finest, now has his own PRS acoustic (pictured), an Adirondack/cocobolo cutaway model with hybrid X bracing and a neck measuring a generous 1.81" at the nut, while Scottish fingerstylist Tony McManus – described as 'the best Celtic guitarist in the world' by John Renbourn – has a similar model with a Euro spruce top, ivory birds inlays instead of abalone and a 1.75" nut width.

The Tonare Grande and Angelus Cutaway now both come as standard models (£5350) in figured mahogany with Euro spruce tops, cocobolo fingerboards and bridges and have X-brace-meets-classical bracing. You can now also order them in Private Stock form with the finest Adirondack and cocobolo tops and backs, along with luxury details such as mammoth ivory and – woo! – diamond inlay bridgepins.

GIBSON

Something Fine

GIBSON's going big for songwriters. The rather magnificent Jackson Browne (below) is a tribute to our fave '70s LA singer-guitarist; based on the 12-fret Roy Smeck, it's got a red spruce top, walnut back and sides, a wide neck and a stereo Trance Audio Amulet. The J-45 John Hiatt is a straight reissue in sitka/mahogany with a modified V neck, and there are three new John Lennons – the J-160E Museum with a Fab Four-caricatured natural top (£6999), the sunburst J-160E VS (£2654), and the J-160E Imagine White (£4999). Also, there's the £3999 50th Anniversary 1960 Hummingbird (right) plus small runs in rosewood and koa.

TANGLEWOOD

Three Historic models mark a new entry point into the TANGLEWOOD Sundance line. The TW40D AN (left) is a dreadnought with an aged-colour top and a trad 1940s look; there's also a TW40O AN auditorium and a TW40S DV S slope-shoulder dread in sunburst. All are constructed of spruce/mahogany and street prices are around £425, or £495 for the electro versions.

IBANEZ

There are two new IBANEZ electro-acoustics in the Steve Vai line, the EP5BP (£399) in cool black with cutaway and solid Engelmann top plus a Fishman Sonicore/ Ibanez AEQ210TF preamp, and the EP10BP (£939) pictured here, upgraded with solid 'hog back and sides, posh inlays and a Fishman Aura IC with 'Steve Vai Original Preset Sound'.

EKO

Anyone who cut their teeth on an indestructible Ranger guitar can now recreate their EKO-strumming salad days with the Conero, a Chinese-made dreadnought with solid sitka top, laminated mahogany back and sides, some very '60s-redolent block markers and height-adjustable saddle. Other Eko-ish features include a 'FastLok' neck joint and a zero fret. Price: £199.

HARDWIRE HT-6 POLYPHONIC TUNER

HT-6 POLYPHONIC TUNER

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TC ELECTRONIC

The Blue Print

Smart Danish manufacturers **TC** continues to surprise with new innovations. These TonePrint compact pedals are the ultimate in versatility. Usually, a pedal's parameters are set by the designers, closing off the hundreds of possibilities to just a few controlled by the knobs – but these have a TonePrint setting which allows you to download extra sounds for free from the TC website via USB, creating endless variations. Players like John Petrucci and Doug Aldrich have already created their own sounds, so all these pedals can instantly become multi-signature models – and the library promises to keep growing. Choose from the Hall Of Fame Reverb, Vortex Flanger, Shaker Vibrato, Corona Chorus (all £109) and Flashback Delay (£125).

DUNLOP

Joe Bonamassa calls his DUNLOP Fuzz Face (£269) 'the inspiration box' and now he has a shiny gold signature model to match his Goldtop Les Paul. A vital part of Joe's current lead guitar sound, this unit harbours handwired circuitry with NOS Russian military germanium transistors.

MXR

The most ear-catching pedal from MXR this year is the Custom Badass 78 Distortion (£109), a classic distortion circuit hot-rodded for extra oomph. Also new to the range are the Analogue Chorus (£134), the Wylde Phaser (£134) which adds dimension to Zakk's legendary solos, and the Noise Clamp (£119) which reduces excess hiss and buzz.

ROLAND & BOSS

ROLAND's V-Guitar System was ground-breaking, and the GR-55 Guitar Synthesiser (£599 or £699 with GK-3 pickup) continues the tradition... with bells on. It enables your guitar to sound like any instrument or any sampled sound conceivable, and now it has instant response time – a drawback with the original system – plus all the usual modelling options for massive possibilities. Meanwhile BOSS has introduced two Loop Stations for sound-on-sound experimenters; among other improvements the RC-30 (£269) and RC-3 (£179) now let you save loops to your computer via USB. The RC-30 now has twin stereo looping as well.

KORG

Before the world went Pod crazy the KORG Pandora was the ultimate in micro tone-shaping. The new Mini Pandora (£96) is surely the tiniest guitar effects unit on the market, but it's packed with 200 preset programs, 200 user programs and 158 types of amp and pedal sounds – and you can use up to seven at once!

ELECTRO-HARMONIX

The ELECTRO-HARMONIX Deluxe Memory Man Tempo (£280) is heralded as the most powerful version of this classic delay pedal ever. On top of the tap tempo there's an expression pedal socket and an effects loop for even greater possibilities. The Neo Mistress (£80) provides lush flanging on a tight budget, while the Killswitch (£35) is a momentary line selector designed to give instant muting. It can also add cool stuttering effects to your arsenal.

HARDWIRE

We're told that the HARDWIRE SP-7 Stereo Phaser (£146) is the most advanced on the market. It has seven phaser effects, taking in vintage and modern sounds, all packed into a super-solid casing. The HT-6 Polyphonic Tuner (£99) allows you to check your tuning with a single strum and spot any stray strings immediately. Five tuning modes are catered for.

Lex Dance

STRYMON

STRYMON pedals are being snapped up as quickly as they're plopped onto the shelves, and the latest models – the Lex Rotary (£249) and the Timeline (£399) – have been hotly anticipated. The Lex is a smart Leslie speaker emulator with seven parameters to tweak, including mic distance and horn level controls; it sounds incredibly authentic. The Timeline could actually be seen as 12 different delay machines in one box, each with extensive control over sonic character. You can save up to 200 presets of your favourite sounds, and there's also a 30-second looper on board to top it off.

IBANEZ

For transparent overdrive that maintains the character of your single-coil pickups, **IBANEZ** reckon the JD9 Jet Driver (£95) will fulfil all your needs. For overdrive with a beefy low end the BB9 Bottom Booster (£85) is here to help, and it'll intensify clean tones too.

WAY HUGE

The **WAY HUGE** Ringworm (£179) is an analogue modulator that uses early synth technology to create five settings of delicious oscillation lunacy – plus there's an expression pedal socket. Also new is the Green Rhino Mk11 (£165) with an added 100Hz EQ knob to cut or boost the low end and a Curve control to fine-tune the frequencies.

ZOOM

ZOOM are convinced that they've harnessed Dave Mustaine's outrageous tone for all to enjoy within the G2.1DM pedal. It contains are 40 presets aping tone of thrash classics like *Rust In Peace*, and the extra-large expression pedal is apparently modelled on the accelerator of Dave's favourite sports car. Vroom.

EVENTIDE

The **EVENTIDE** Space (£499) boasts 12 bespoke reverb combination effects previously available only in the company's top-end rack processors. It also offers jaw-dropping delays, pitch shifters, tremolo, modulation and much more, all squeezed into a stage-ready, affordable package. A pretty astounding little box.

T-REX

The **T-REX** Twister 2 flanger/chorus (£230) is the result of a complete overhaul based on user feedback, and that means a wider tonal range from subtle to totally bonkers. The Tonebug Sustainer (£109) compresses your signal then adds gain for long lasting, natural-sounding powerchords and much more.

VOX

The update to the **VOX** ToneLab, the EX (£288) has caused much excitement and could provide stiff competition for the Line 6 Pod. It has built-in stereo monitor speakers, a powerful Valve Reactor circuit with a 12AX7 and enough amp, cab and effect models to sate any appetite. The Dynamic Looper (£239) focuses on live use, storing two loops with a useful total recorded time of 90 seconds. It's also effectively a multi-FX with everything from chorus and phaser to overdrive plus loop effects like crossfade, stutter and reverse.

REDWITCH

REDWITCH says its Seven Sisters pedals are the world's first lithium ion cell rechargeable pedals. Plug them into almost any power supply overnight and you'll get two to three weeks of gigging with no worries about expensive batteries. Choose from the Scarlett overdrive, Grace compressor, Ivy distortion, Ruby fuzz, Eve tremolo, Violet delay and the Lily clean boost.

first impressions

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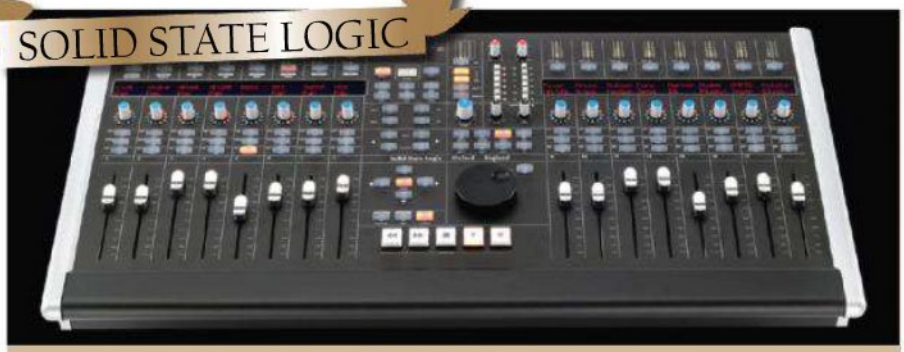
TASCAM

All In One

Tascam has come up with the modern musician's ideal travelling partner in their new DP-03 eight-track Portastudio. As well as having built-in stereo condenser mics, a CD burner, a tuner, metronome and effects, it comes with nifty editing, mixing and mastering facilities to sink your teeth into and can also record two tracks simultaneously. Tascam also has a pair of new tuners: the solar-rechargeable TC-1S comes in six vivid colours, has four tuning modes and shockproof casing, while the TG-7 has some great tuning options and a built-in metronome. Finally, the new GB-10 tuition tool is a trainer/recorder for guitar and bass. It works its magic by slowing down mp3s without altering the pitch, giving you all the time you need to master tricky licks. What's more it has CD-quality recording, inbuilt FX (inc. amp modelling) and overdub capability.

SOLID STATE LOGIC



Costing less than the sum of its parts, SSL's Nucleus console allows users to interchange between up to three DAWs at the push of a button. With two eight-channel banks, 'SuperAnalogue' monitoring, two high-spec analogue mic preamps, a pro-quality USB interface and their Duende Native plug-ins package, it's the real deal. Also from SSL is the X Rack Stereo Dynamics Module offering Duality-quality channel-strip processing and more.

ALESIS

The ALESIS iO4 four-channel USB interface is a solid workhorse suitable for recording anywhere you find inspiration. Each channel has a high-def mic preamp, 48V phantom power, 1/4" jack, 1/4" TRS insert and XLR input for recording in 16-bit or 24-bit. The Multimix 16 USB FX has eight mic preamps, four channels of parametric EQ, USB input and effects. Lastly, Guitar-Link Plus puts Native Instruments's Guitar Rig LE software at your fingertips.

STEINBERG

New on STEINBERG's roster is Cubase 6. As well as a new look, Cubase 6 offers some priceless new editing features, all the tones you could wish for with VST Amp Rack, and the upgraded HALion Sonic SE with tons of production-ready sounds and instruments to play with.

BLUE MICS

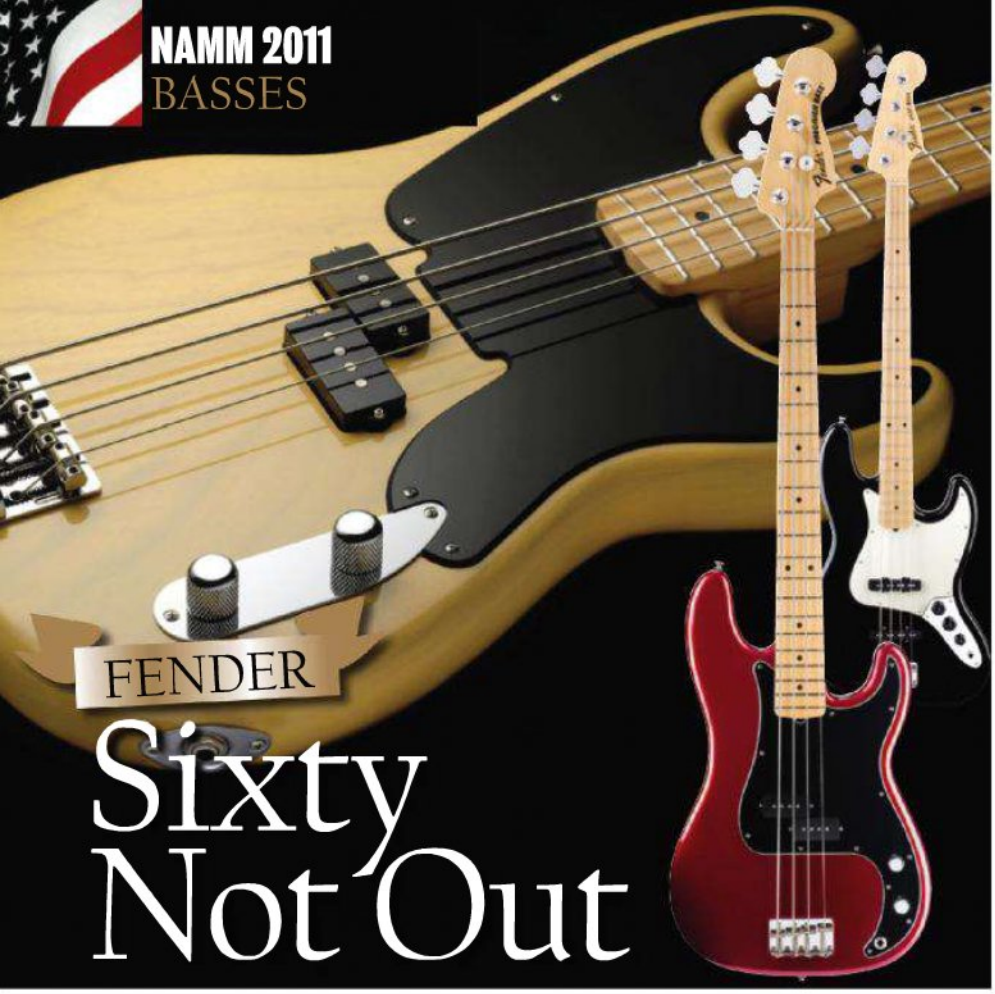
The Yeti was a home recording gem, so now that BLUE has updated it to include both digital and analogue (XLR) outputs, we're all smiles. The Yeti Pro's onboard ADC can manage 24-bit/192kHz resolution and its custom condenser capsules and multi-pattern recording capabilities give it a serious edge. Neat.

ZOOM

ZOOM has shrunk the R24 and R16 recorders into eight-track format for the compact new R8. It shares the same two built-in condenser mics as its big brothers; the weeny size make it a great choice for writing on the move, and it'll also double up as an interface and an affordable sampler.

AKAI

AKAI's chunky new EIE I/O (say it out loud) USB audio interface is a sure-fire winner for recording on the fly. It's four in and four out, promises up to 24-bit resolution and is compatible with most workstations and performance software. It looks pretty darn cool with its old-school VU meters, too.



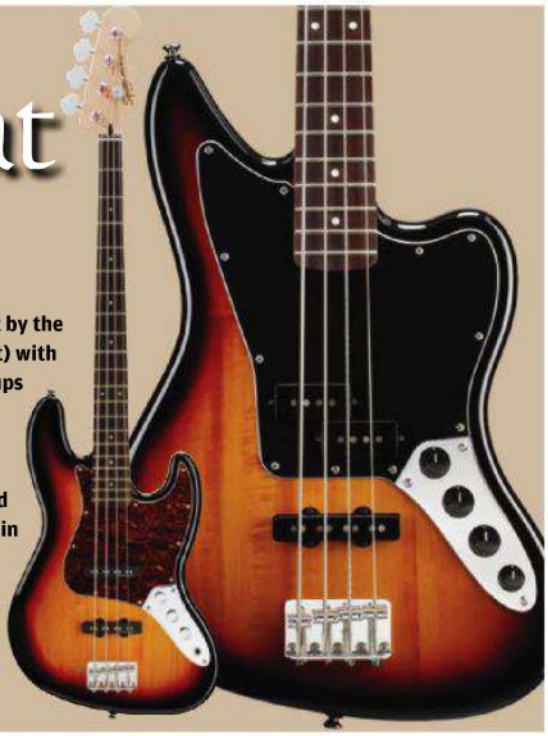
FENDER
Sixty Not Out

The **FENDER** 60th Anniversary Precision (£1345) goes further than its Tele sister with a thin-skin blonde finish, a big black guard and the chrome plate of the '51 original with the split humbucker of '57. With a modern-radius maple neck and an ash body it's a cool option.

The US-built American Special Precision and Jazz (top right, £1042) have slim neck profiles and Greasebucket circuitry to roll off highs while keeping low-end definition. Bodies are alder, and fingerboards are maple (choose black or candy apple red) or rosewood (white or three-tone sunburst). Also, the Blink-182 Mark Hoppus bass now comes with a reversed Duncan Basslines SPB-3 pickup and is available in two colours, surf green transparent and new white blonde.

The Rumble series has two new magnetic-mounting heads and three new cabs. The 350 (£382) and 150 (£250) amps have two preset EQ shapes and footswitchable overdrive. The 500W 1x12" and 2x8" cabs have Eminence neo drivers, while the 1000W Rumble 410 packs a big punch.

SQUIER
All That JAZZ



Jazz Bass lovers will be knocked out by the SQUIER Vintage Modified Jazz (right) with Duncan Designed alnico JB101 pickups and a leftie option. The VM FSR 70s Jazz Bass, with just 1200 allocated to Europe, has a maple board with block markers. The Vintage Modified Jaguar Bass Special (far right; £262 in black, sunburst or trans crimson) has P/J pickups and a three-band active tone circuit. A sister bass, the Jaguar Bass HB Special (£274 in black, candy apple or silver), comes with one lairy humbucker.

BURNS

Look out later this year for the BURNS Nu-Sonic Bass pictured right (£699), a fine recreation of the '60s budget fave, while if your guitarist thinks you'll never beat the cool looks of his Marvin six-string then you can get one over on him with the new BL-1800 WH Shadow Bass – a hefty beast with an alder body and a maple neck with a scrolled headstock, white lacquer with tortie guards, three pickups with that mad three-bar handrest, a Res-o-Tube bridge and even Van Gent-type tuners.

MARKBASS

Biggest news from MARKBASS is the TTE500, a 'modern vintage' head with valve preamp, a valve compressor, a colour EQ filter (like a valve-driven VLE) and a new TTE (Tube Technology Emulator) analogue power amp. It's 500W at 4 ohms and weighs 5kg/11lbs. There's also a new mini cab, the 50W 1x8" Micromark 801, and two new effect pedals – the MB Octaver analogue one/two octave-down pedal and the Bass Tube Marker compact bass distortion.

YAMAHA

The latest YAMAHA BB424X (£499) and BB425X basses (£550) offer neat '80s looks with five-piece necks, alder bodies, straight and split-coil pickups, 45-degree through-body stringing and four finishes – black, white, sunburst and metallic red. Also showing was the latest Billy Sheehan Attitude III (£2854) with a new monster double-rail humbucker at the neck, a 45-degree five-bolt neck joint and pre-aged wood.

Big Top

ASHDOWN

Oh, yeah. **ASHDOWN** has unveiled the tempting LB-30 Drophead 15H (£1349), which mates the 30W all-valve Little Bastard head with a retro flip-top 1x15" + HF cab. It's a cool rig, and the 200W DP-200 Drophead 15H (£2149) will cope with more demanding gigs. The JJ500 is a signature head for famed Strangler JJ Burnel; it's got 575W, a 12-band EQ and Harmonic Emphasis which, says Ashdown, sounds like you've just replaced your strings. Also new are three new Dual Tube Preamp Series combos with a 2x12AX7 front end. The 550 and the 330 both come as a 2x10" or as a 1x15"; with the 220 you get a choice of 1x15" and 1x12".

ORANGE

Over at **ORANGE** the potent TB300C (£650) combo installs 300W of valve preamp and Class D power inside a isobaric 'one speaker behind the other' 2x10" cab, while the larger TB500C (£750) – which uses the full output of the little Terror Bass 500 head – contains two bigger 12" drivers in the same layout. This means a high level of power handling and huge dollops of fat low end from a super-compact rig. And if you're wondering how far Class D technology can go, then Orange was also displaying a one-off prototype 5000W – yes, 5000W – Terror Bass. Uh... scary.

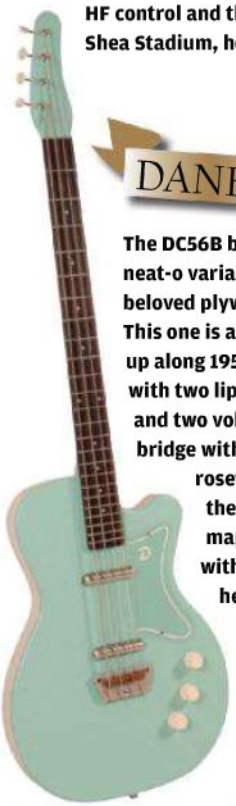
AMPEG

AMPEG's hallowed low-wattage all-valve B-15 Portaflex is back, handbuilt by Metro Amps in the USA, with 30W of output, simple Bass and Treble knobs and a 15" driver. It weighs 95lbs and costs $4000, but the tone will likely be worth it. There are also two non-valve new Portaflexes built around the PF-350 (£295, 350W, solid-state/Class D power, Bass, Middle and Treble knobs, limiter) and the PF-500 (£375, 500W, MOSFET/Class D power, five-way Mid Tone selector). The matching PF-115HE and PF-210HE flip-top cabs handle 450W and come with ceramic Eminences and an HF horn, black diamond tolex and B-15 style grille cloth.

TC ELECTRONIC

Light, loud and great-sounding, **TC** bass amps are fast gaining fans – but now there's a real monster waiting in the wings, the 1600W Blacksmith head (£2200), capable of handling anything down to 2 ohms... so you could use four RS410 cabs! It's got a chromatic tuner, four bands of EQ, 'each string' compression, TubeTone valve emulation, 'intelligent' HF control and three user memories. Shea Stadium, here we come.

DANELECTRO



The DC56B bass is yet another neat-o variant on **DANELECTRO**'s beloved plywood tone formula. This one is a single cutaway drawn up along 1956 lines and comes with two lipstick tubes, one tone and two volumes and a simple bridge with the original-style rosewood saddle, while the long-scale 24-fret maple neck is topped with a dolphin-shaped headstock. Choose, most likely with difficulty, between aqua and black finishes and expect an RRP of £349.

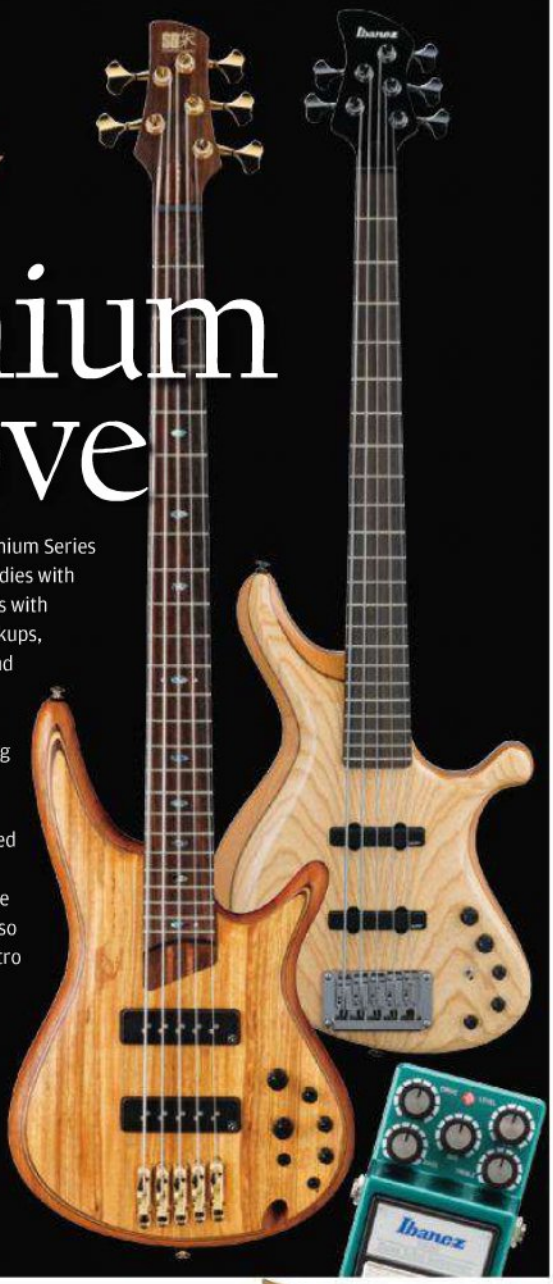
ROLAND

The three combos in **ROLAND**'s new compact Cube-XL Bass range – the Cube-20XL, Cube-60XL and Cube-120XL – should be able to cope with everything from rehearsal to weeny gigs. Features include updated effects, such as the new Drive and Poly Octave, as well as multiple COSM amp models, while the two bigger versions come with two-way coaxial speakers, custom flared ports, onboard phrase looping, and 'Super Low', Power Squeezer and Solo functions.

IBANEZ

Premium Groove

Over at **IBANEZ** the all-new SR Premium Series basses have smooth mahogany bodies with figured tops, wenge/bubinga necks with titanium trussrods, posh Nordstrand pickups, three-band EQs, Mono-Rail IV bridges and gold hardware. We're definitely getting the SR1200E in the UK (pic right, £860). Upping the money, the sculptural-looking Ibanez Groovelines combine nice woods with two active single-coils. There's the natural-finish five-string G105NT (pictured far right, £1822) plus two four-strings, the G104NT four-string in natural and the G104DE in black (both £1728). There's also a high-end version of the big-bridged retro ATK, the Prestige ATK1200 (£1243). For the rock-inclined there's the TS9B Bass Tube Screamer and the BB9 Bottom Booster pedals, while in ampsville we have three new tilt-back Soundwave combos, the SW80, SW35 and SW15; a useful new 1x15" version of the 500W Promethean combo, the P5115K; and three new matching Promethean cabs.



GENZ BENZ

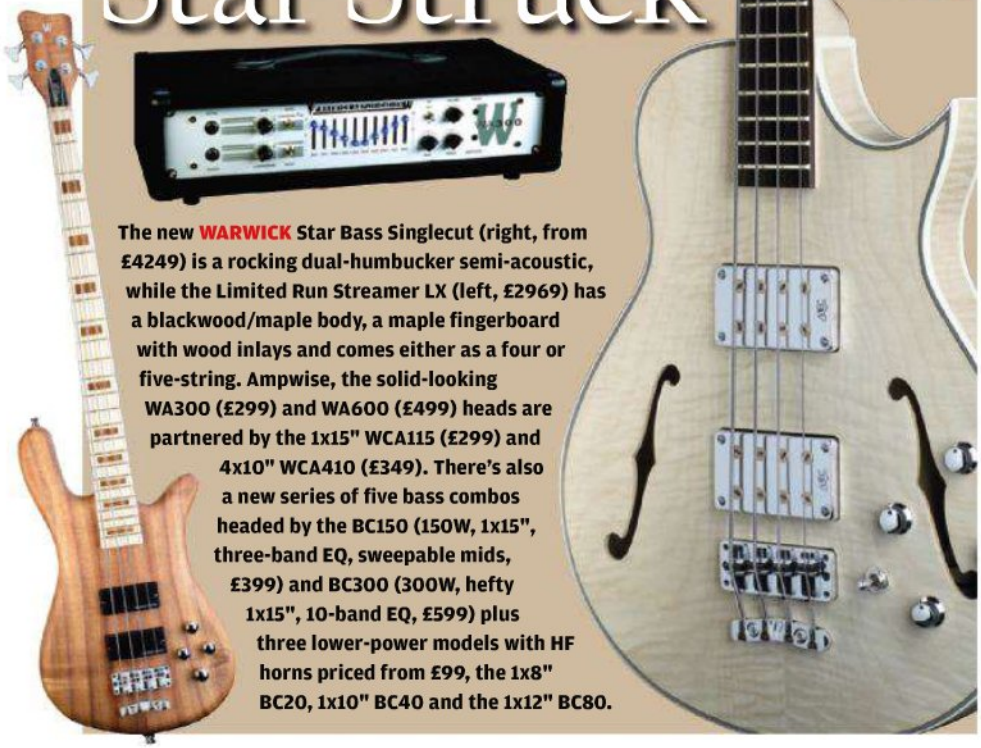
The GENZ BENZ Streamliner STM 600 (£602) chucks out 600W/375W. It has a 3x12AX7 preamp, passive high/low EQ plus a valve-driven mid EQ; the STM 900 (£802) has the same facilities, but this time giving a generous 900W or 600W depending on your speaker resistance. Also new, the 900W/500W ShuttleMax 9.2 (£1054) is a hybrid variant of the ShuttleMax 12 with dual FET, Tube channels and a four-band EQ.

REVEREND

NAMM saw five tasty new basses from REVEREND. Sharing the same solidbody design are the Decision Bass (right), the Justice, with two blade humbuckers; the Mercalli 5, with two fat humbuckers and five strings; and the rocky Thunder Gun, with fat humbuckers again but a reversed headstock. Finally there's the Dub King (far right) a very striking semi-acoustic with two pickups, a single cutaway and a single slash soundhole.

Star Struck

WARWICK



The new WARWICK Star Bass Singlecut (right, from £4249) is a rocking dual-humbucker semi-acoustic, while the Limited Run Streamer LX (left, £2969) has a blackwood/maple body, a maple fingerboard with wood inlays and comes either as a four or five-string. Ampwise, the solid-looking WA300 (£299) and WA600 (£499) heads are partnered by the 1x15" WCA115 (£299) and 4x10" WCA410 (£349). There's also a new series of five bass combos headed by the BC150 (150W, 1x15", three-band EQ, sweepable mids, £399) and BC300 (300W, hefty 1x15", 10-band EQ, £599) plus three lower-power models with HF horns priced from £99, the 1x8" BC20, 1x10" BC40 and the 1x12" BC80.

DEAN

With official approval from the late Who bassist's estate, DEAN is launching two John Entwistle basses. The Spider is a lavish through-neck Explorer with a flamed maple top, a vee headstock plus spider web inlays on the body; the Hybrid (£799) is a more sedate modern rock affair in red or black with a maple of rosewood board and a pearloid guard. Both come with the new Aphex Exciter/ Big Bottom/Compression circuit onboard... and that, we're told, is an industry first.

Download a QR scanner on your smartphone, scan this image and watch the new Cube video featuring Zane Lowe.

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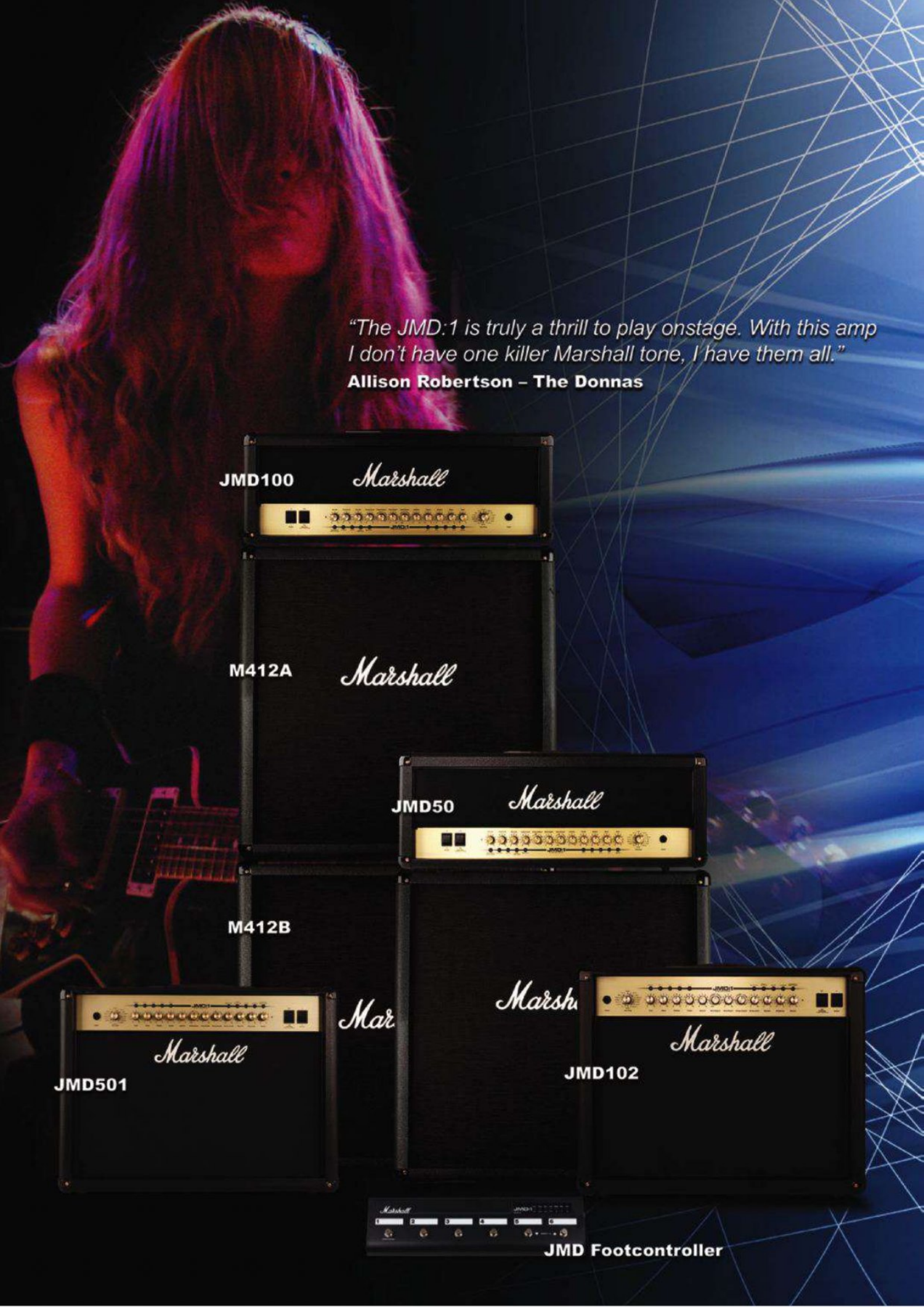
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'Every time you do something, it leads on to something else. It's another step on the journey'

Gary Moore 1952-2011

A Legend Remembered

Gary Moore, rock and blues guitarist extraordinaire, died on 6 February 2011. Michael Heatley traces his musical legacy

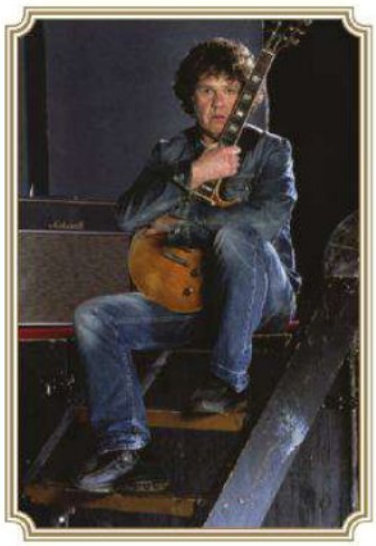
Unlike many legends, Gary Moore made more than just one mark on the global music scene. Mention his name to a hard-rock fan, and the immediate response will be Thin Lizzy. Jazzers will recall a '70s stint with Jon Hiseman's Colosseum II while Cream fanatics will love or hate BBM, his short-lived liaison with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker in the 90s. Then his solo career brought chart anthems like *Out In The Fields*, *Empty Rooms* and *Over The Hills And Far Away*.

Of course, there's also blues, the genre which supplied Gary with much inspiration from 1990 onwards and led to him sharing the stage with Albert Collins, Albert King and BB King. When Moore rediscovered the music that had fuelled his first youthful excursions, however, he'd already packed more into 20 years than many do in double that time.

Gary Moore was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1952. His father was a concert promoter, so the youngster grew up absorbing as much live music as he did the family record collection. His stage debut came at the age of six, singing a song with a showband at the city's Queen's Hall, standing on a chair to reach the microphone. In 1963, he saw the Beatles playing at the Ritz and the die was cast.

By the age of 14 he was playing with the Beat Boys at Belfast's Maritime Hotel, following in the footsteps of Van Morrison. It was here he met another Irish legend, Rory Gallagher, who'd travelled up from Cork. 'We used to play and lend each other our guitars 'cos we didn't have any spare strings,' Moore once recalled. 'I left my Telecaster on stage for him and he left that Strat for me. He was a few years older and we got on well. He was into the real old blues and I was listening to Peter Green and Eric Clapton.'

Gary was still a teenager when he found fame with Skid Row, the Dublin-based hard-rockers he went south of the border to join in 1968. This was where he first met Phil Lynott, the band's original singer. Fleetwood Mac's manager Clifford Davis took them to the States, but two albums later it was all over for Gary. He was moving on, establishing a pattern that saw him flit from one style of music and band to another.

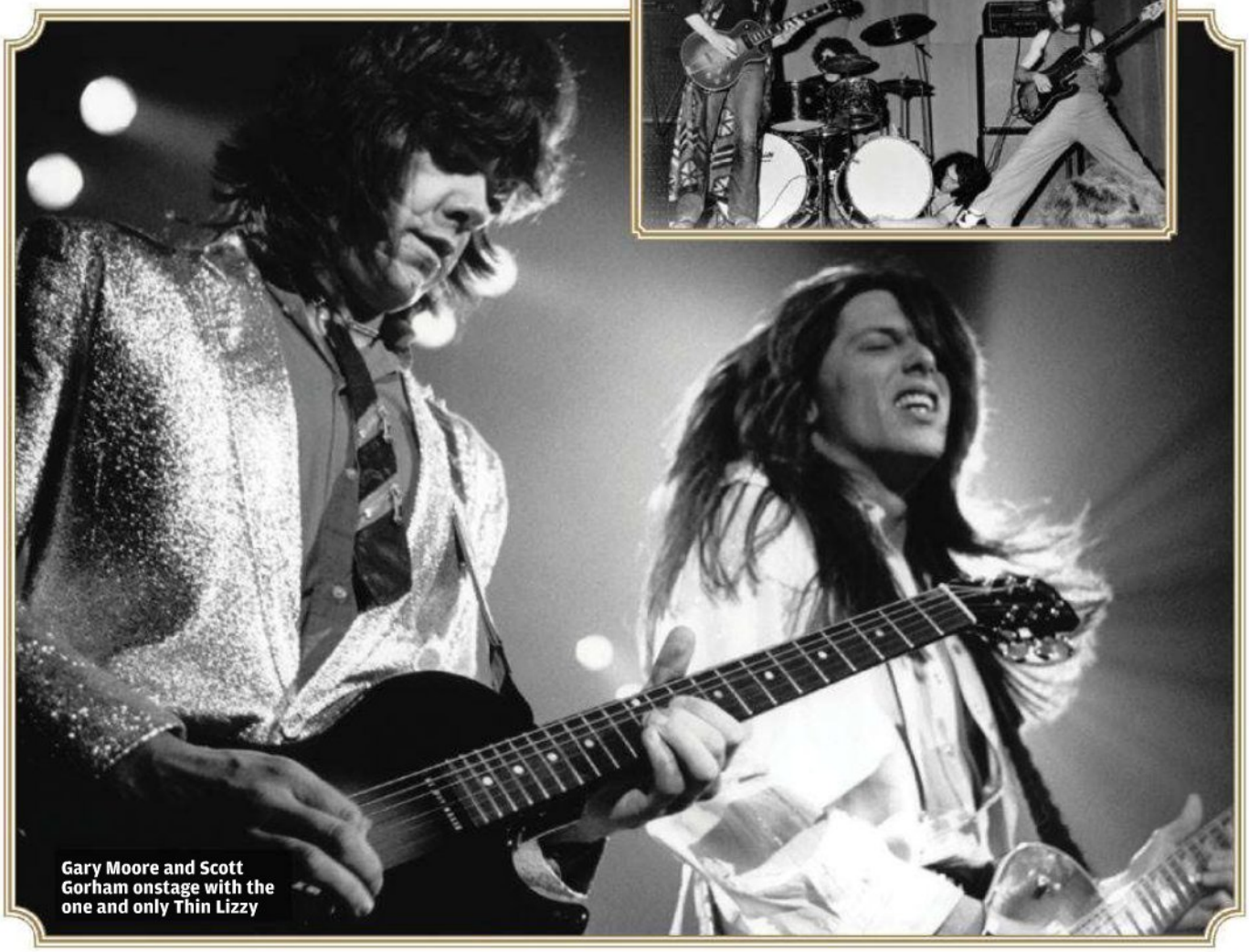


After a low-key debut solo album, *Grinding Stone*, he enjoyed a first stint with Thin Lizzy after friend Eric Bell's departure. Despite a great start with the April 1974 single *Little Darlin'*, and contributing to classic album track *Still In Love With You*, the wild-living Moore soon made way for the Scott Gorham/Brian Robertson axis.

'I got bored with the three-piece format very quickly. Getting drunk every night, going up there and going on autopilot.'

1970: Gary Moore on guitar with Skid Row in Copenhagen

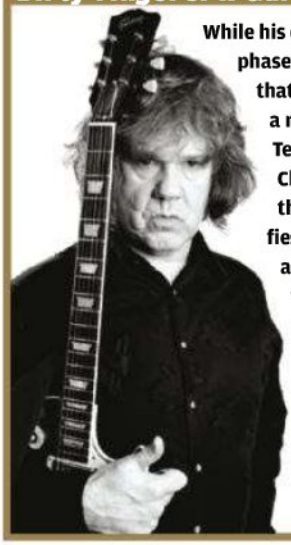
Photo: Jorgen Angel/Getty



Gary Moore and Scott Gorham onstage with the one and only Thin Lizzy

Photo: Fin Costello/Getty

Dirty Fingers: A Gary Moore Gearfile



While his ownership of Peter Green's legendary 'out of phase' Les Paul indelibly associated Gary Moore with that instrument, he employed other guitars too, like a red Gibson 335 for his blues repertoire or a '68 Tele with a later neck, for recording. A Strat-style Charvel with a humbucker was his workhorse in the '70s-'80s, but was supplanted in 1982 by a fiesta red '60/'61 Fender Strat. Amplification was almost always Marshalls, latterly DSL100s through 4x12" cabs, though he used Soldanos in the early '90s. And while he'd backed away from effects in recent years – his 2007 album *Close As You Get* was recorded with 'just a guitar and amp' – Gary's live set-up included a T-Rex pedal board with five or six pedals including Roommate reverb, a Mudhoney distortion and a Moller boost.

His self-confessed unprofessionalism was ended by his next boss, drummer Jon Hiseman. 'I was getting pissed all the time, so he got me up against the wall and said "If you want to play with me, you've got to sort yourself out." He was very good at putting me on the right path, teaching me about music and integrity.'

Hiseman's jazz-rock supergroup Colosseum II proved to be a steep learning curve. 'Working with people like Jon and Don Airey, who were so much more technically competent than I was, was a challenge. After gigs you'd come off and have to lie down 'cos you'd have a headache from the concentration. I was playing fusion lines, and it really took it out of you.'

His three-album association with Hiseman broadened his contacts book. Andrew Lloyd Webber, no less, offered to write a guitar concerto for Moore after seeing him play on cellist brother Julian's *Variations* project 'I didn't pursue it,' said Moore. 'I didn't want to get caught up in that classical-rock thing, like Sky.'

Instead Gary returned to Lizzy to tour the States as Brian Robertson's temporary replacement in 1977, supporting Queen. In 1978 he rejoined permanently, having considerable input into the *Black Rose* album, but he was not happy with the band's drug-fuelled lifestyle and constantly locked horns with leader Lynott.

GARY MOORE
From The Beginning

1952
Gary Moore, first names Robert William, is born on 4 April in Belfast, Northern Ireland

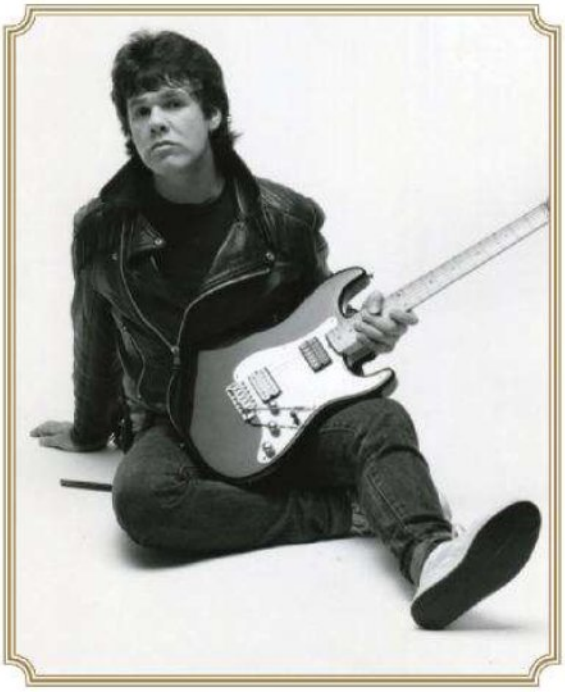
1968
Gary joins Skid Row with Phil Lynott, drummer Noel Bridgeman and bassist Brush Shiels

1974
Gary joins Thin Lizzy in January but swiftly leaves to join Jon Hiseman's Colosseum II

1978
Hits the UK Top 10 with Parisienne Walkways, with Phil Lynott as guest vocalist

1979
Quits Lizzy for good during a US tour after a row with Lynott and flies to LA to form G-Force

Gary Moore 1952-2011



Catalogue

Skid Row: Skid (1970)
'It was very messy, a '60s trio trying to do that speedy thing,' said Gary – but worth a listen nevertheless

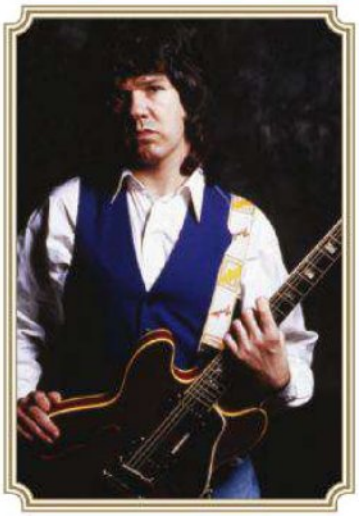
Thin Lizzy: Black Rose (1979)
Moore makes his mark as co-writer of *Sarah* and the title track, with its Irish traditional elements

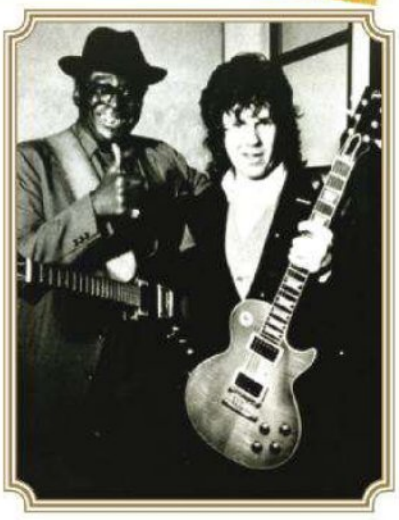
Gary Moore: Corridors Of Power (1982)
Neil Murray, Ian Paice and Jack Bruce lend their talents to kicking off Gary's solo career in earnest

Gary Moore: Still Got The Blues (1990)
The first blues album and still many fans' favourite. Brian Downey guests

BBM: Around The Next Dream (1994)
More than just an exercise in nostalgia, this supergroup with Bruce and Baker deserves a fair hearing

Gary Moore: Blues For Greeny (1995)
Almost too faithful a tribute to Peter Green, but Gary rolls back the distortion and demonstrates his controlled guitar mastery





The inevitable split came in 1979, halfway through a US tour and just months after *Parisienne Walkways*, an atmospheric ballad with guest vocals from Phil Lynott, had reached the UK Top 10 to open Gary's account under his own name. 'I think about Phil a lot,' Gary said in 2007, explaining how having Lizzy drummer Brian Downey in his solo band had helped him come to terms with those turbulent times. 'It's a bit of a healing process... in a weird way, we help each other by talking. We both had a lot of grievances about how the band fell apart, the heroin thing and everything. But I look back at Phil with fondness, and still really miss him.'

He remained in Los Angeles to reinvent himself as a hard-rock guitar hero with the band G-Force. 'Like a lot of young guitarists I didn't know what I was doing,' he recalled. 'We needed a producer to kick our asses and get it all together.

'I had the songs, I had the musicians, but it just didn't work out. I did that terrible thing of DI-ing the guitar to try to get an original sound. It sounded okay in the studio, but it didn't transfer to the record.' Taking a step back, Moore took refuge in a band formed by ex-King Crimson and ELP bassist Greg Lake before reviving his solo career.

As the decade progressed, Gary's rock-based output increasingly reflected his Celtic roots in an echo of *Black Rose*, the Lizzy album he'd played such a part in creating. As ever, his guitar was out front as his calling card. 'When I used to buy Eric Clapton records,' he told journalist Chris Welch, 'I used to get disappointed because he underplayed the guitar hero bit. And I don't want to do that.' A dressing-room chat with bassist Bob Daisley sowed the seeds of change, and when he released *Still Got The Blues* in March 1990 Moore was both returning to his musical roots and following in the footsteps of his idols. That album sold three million off the bat, and 1992's *After Hours* became his highest-charting UK release at Number 4. As a Clapton fan, he couldn't turn down the chance to front the rhythm section of Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce in supergroup BBM. This volatile line-up of talent only lasted for an album and a tour, and by '95 Gary was back on the blues trail recording a tribute to Peter Green.

> *'I was disappointed because Eric Clapton underplayed the guitar hero bit'*

He had acquired the former Fleetwood Mac leader's 1959 Les Paul Standard around 1970 and used it on *Blues For Greeny*.

1987
Wild Frontier, dedicated to the late Phil Lynott, becomes Gary Moore's first UK Top 10 album

1990
His album Still Got The Blues features Albert King, Albert Collins and George Harrison

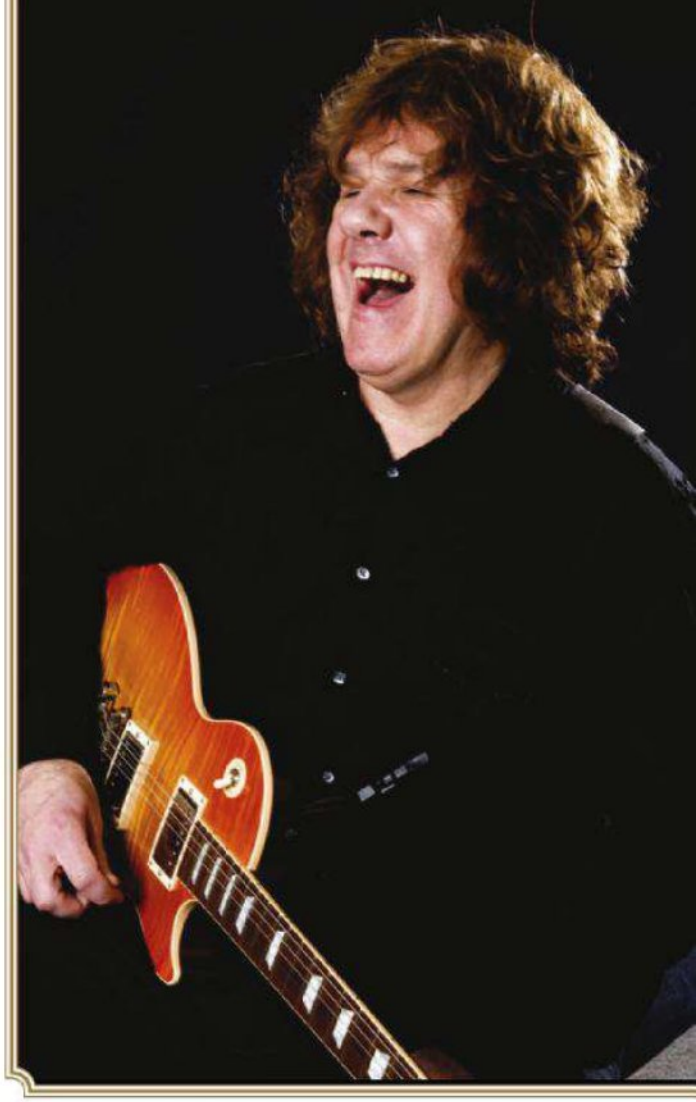
1994
Gary forms BBM with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker, releasing Around The Next Dream

2005
Reunites with Thin Lizzy members on stage in Dublin as Phil Lynott's statue is unveiled

2010
Going further afield: Gary and his blues band take the show over to Japan, Russia and Korea

2011
Gary Moore found dead in a hotel room in Estepona, Spain

Gary Moore 1952-2011



After joining Moore onstage at the Shepherds Bush Empire, it was a short but significant step for Green – who had been retired for a quarter of a century – to resume his own musical career. The Les Paul sold in 2006 for a rumoured half a million dollars, making it the highest-priced example ever to change hands.

The 1990s was Moore's blues decade, but it frustrated him when the public and/or critics wouldn't let him step out of the genre. He was particularly disappointed that 1997's *Dark Days In Paradise*, highly autobiographical and believed to have been inspired by the recent end of his first marriage, was not given a fairer hearing. 'I loved the songs on that,' he reflected a decade later. 'I think they're the best I've ever written. People said there wasn't enough guitar on it, but it just had the wrong name on the front. If it had been some new guy they would have loved it, but because it was me it was too much of a departure.'

Also unexpected was 1999's *A Different Beat* and its fashionable dance rhythms. Again, though, there was resistance from fans and it failed to make the Top 50: this writer saw a show at Croydon where most of the audience remained stubbornly indifferent until the first blues number kicked in. Record-company pressure brought a return to 12-bars with 2001's *Back To The Blues*.

In 2002 came an attempt at creating a SRV/Hendrix-inspired rock band – another failure. 'Scars was the drummer from Primal Scream [Darrin Mooney], who'd been my drummer anyway, and Cass [Lewis] from Skunk Anansie. I enjoyed playing with them, but I had about as much luck as Bowie with Tin Machine!'

Moore had the reputation of being mean and moody but was generous with advice to younger guitarists. Legend has it that he was in Chandler's guitar shop in the mid-'80s when the phone rang. The assistant asked Gary if he could play the solo from *Waiting For An Alibi* for the person on the phone. It was Johnny Marr, then of the Smiths. If you listen to Marr's solo on *Shoplifters Of The World Unite*, it's almost pure Thin Lizzy.

Another way in which Gary Moore helped spread the guitar gospel was by touring extensively in the former Iron Curtain countries. His last ever tour dates in 2010 would be in the Ukraine and in Russia.

'Gary had incredible enthusiasm, great energy. He lived for music' – Eric Bell

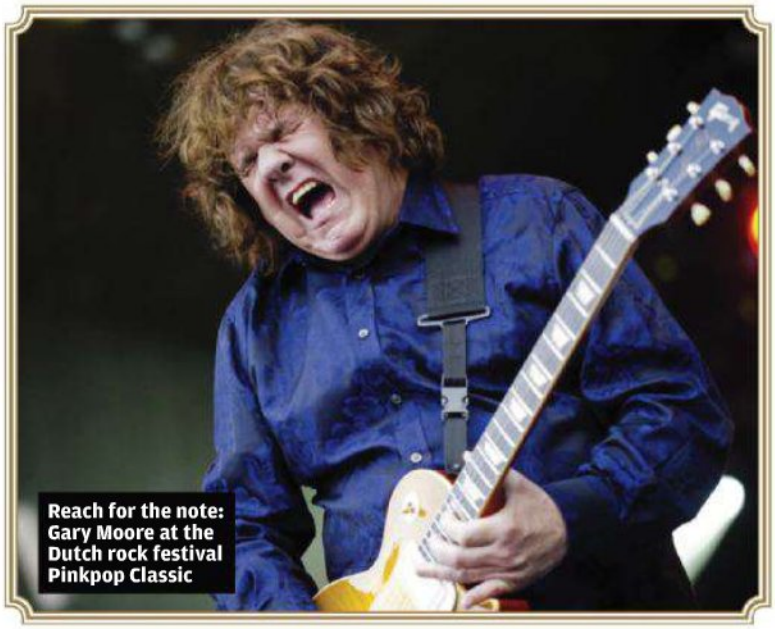
The bluesy *Bad For You Baby* was to be Moore's final album in 2008, but festival sets last year at High Voltage and the Montreux Jazz Festival saw him returning to '80s rock hits at the expense of 12-bar material. He'd reunited after a 'break' of 21 years with keyboards/second guitarist Neil Carter – ex-Wild Horses and UFO, nowadays a respected school music teacher – who had been his lieutenant and songwriting partner in those heady, chart-riding days. Another turn in Moore's multi-faceted career seemed rather likely.

Gary was on holiday in Spain when he was found dead in a hotel room on the Costa del Sol on Sunday 6 February. He was 58. Initial reports suggested he choked in his sleep, having consumed a hamburger washed down with champagne. He was married twice and left behind two daughters and two sons – one of whom, Jack, has appeared playing guitar on stage with him.

His fellow musicians queued to pay tribute. Bob Geldof was the most eloquent, stating that Moore 'was one of the great Irish bluesmen. There is a sort of trinity of Van Morrison, Rory Gallagher and Gary Moore. His playing was exceptional and beautiful. We won't see his like again.'

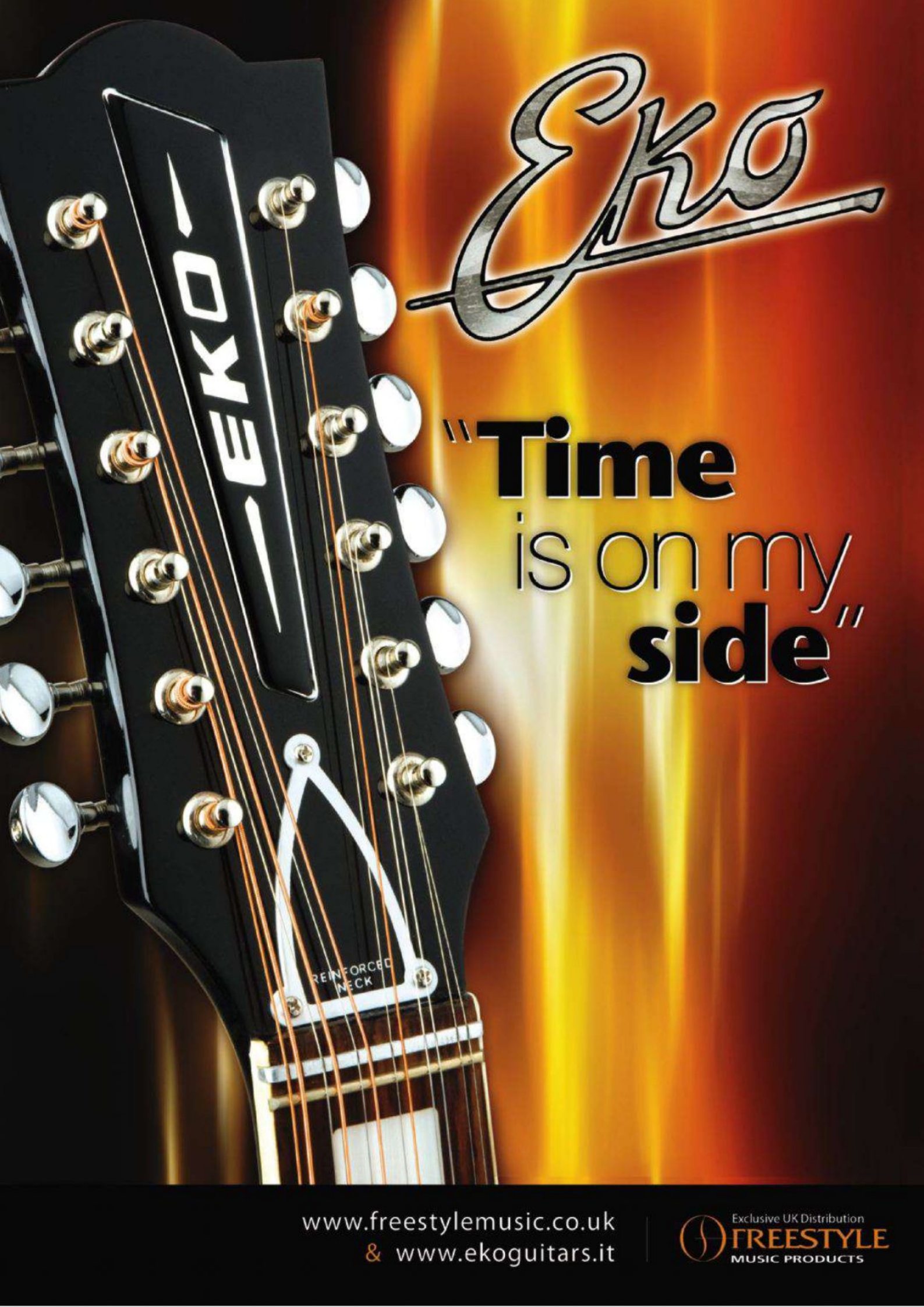
Thin Lizzy founding member Eric Bell, who recently lamented the loss of Phil Lynott in these pages, had known Gary since age 11. 'He was a good laugh; a lot of people said he was kind of grumpy but I never saw him that way. He had incredible enthusiasm, great energy... he just lived for music.'

When asked by Dublin Events Guide a few years ago if he had any regrets, Gary answered an emphatic no. 'Every time you do something,' he said, 'it leads on to something else. It's another step on the journey.' His own journey may have ended too soon, but Gary Moore's music and musicianship will surely live on.



Reach for the note: Gary Moore at the Dutch rock festival Pinkpop Classic

Photo: Marten van Dijl/AFP/Getty Images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Alive And Picking

A multi-million selling live double album and an enviable helping of boyish good looks elevated Peter Frampton to godlike status in the '70s and he's still going strong, having added a Grammy to his achievements in 2006. Rik Flynn meets the man that took a talkbox and a Les Paul, broke all the records, and changed arena rock forever

He hurtled up the charts as a teenager with the Herd and sparred with Steve Marriott on matching Gretsch Duo Jets with '70s rock heavyweights Humble Pie, but without question Peter Frampton's most remarkable achievement is his six-times-platinum double album *Frampton Comes Alive!* It became the best-selling live album of all time, digging its heels in for nearly 30 years until Garth Brooks rode into town, guns ablaze, to take the title.

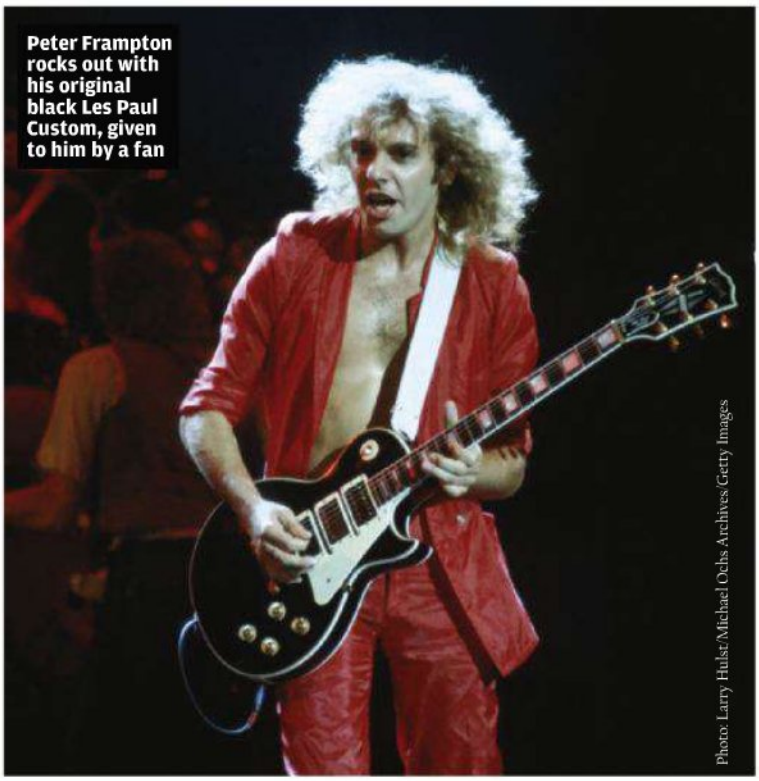
And it wasn't just the music that fans couldn't get enough of. When the 'pretty power rocker' appeared on the cover of *Rolling Stone* baring his naked torso, he reluctantly became a teenage heartthrob overnight, with only a troop of bodyguards between him and the prepubescent whims of a generation of adolescent girls. In the words of *Wayne's World*'s metalhead protagonist, 'Everybody in the world has *Frampton Comes Alive!* If you lived in the suburbs, you were issued it.' We are, quite literally, not worthy.

With the decadent years of his heyday behind him, Frampton has kept the ball rolling with a string of varied releases and an instrumental album, *Fingerprints*, that landed him a Grammy in 2006. We find a contented Frampton just having finished a more song-based offering, *Thank You Mr Churchill*. He's long since departed from the hit-seeking days of the '70s.

'There was no conscious thought of commerciality in any form,' says Frampton. 'You're always chasing something, but with the industry how it is now, there's nothing to chase. I shouldn't have been chasing it in the first place! It's the death of any thought pattern as far as being creative is concerned.'

The album's title track began the process. 'It's always one song that seems to set the tone,' he ponders. 'With this one, I felt like reassessing where I had come from. *Thank You Mr Churchill* set the scene for the whole autobiographical look.' The track is an ode to the part that the war played in Frampton's existence – and the autobiographical content doesn't stop there. 'If Churchill was how I got to be in the world,' he continues, 'then *Vaudeville Nanna* was about family, and how I came to play the guitar.' The poetically-named *Vaudeville Nanna And The Banjolele* surveys the moment Frampton discovered a banjolele in his Grandma's loft and the excitement – and the career – that ensued.

Much like the man himself, the record is multi-dimensional. 'I thought, it doesn't have to all just be autobiographical,' he recalls. 'It can be about things that really bug me too.' This is something of an understatement: the album goes on to cover the Wall Street meltdown, kidnap, the plight of orphans programmed to bear arms, terrorism... in terms of subject matter, it's pretty ambitious stuff.



Peter Frampton rocks out with his original black Les Paul Custom, given to him by a fan

Photo: Larry Hulst/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

'With this industry, there's nothing to chase. I shouldn't have been chasing it in the first place! It's the death of creativity'

SOLO Catalogue

PETER FRAMPTON: FRAMPTON COMES ALIVE (1976)

Using a combination of his iconic Les Paul Custom and a Heil Talkbox, this double live album made Peter Frampton a rock megastar

PETER FRAMPTON: FINGERPRINTS (2006)

Fourteen tracks of instrumental genius including a rip-roaring version of Soundgarden's hit *Black Hole Sun*. It earned Frampton a Grammy

PETER FRAMPTON: THANK YOU MR CHURCHILL (2011)

The latest album offers a varied set of blistering cuts and features Motown soul legends the Funk Brothers and Frampton's son Julian

Gear

Guitars: Gibson Les Paul Custom, Tom Murphy aged Les Paul, SG, Fender Hank Marvin Stratocaster, Martin Frampton Camel D-42
Amps: 1959 tweed Fender Deluxe, Marshall
Effects: Gig FX Frampton signature Megawah, Chopper

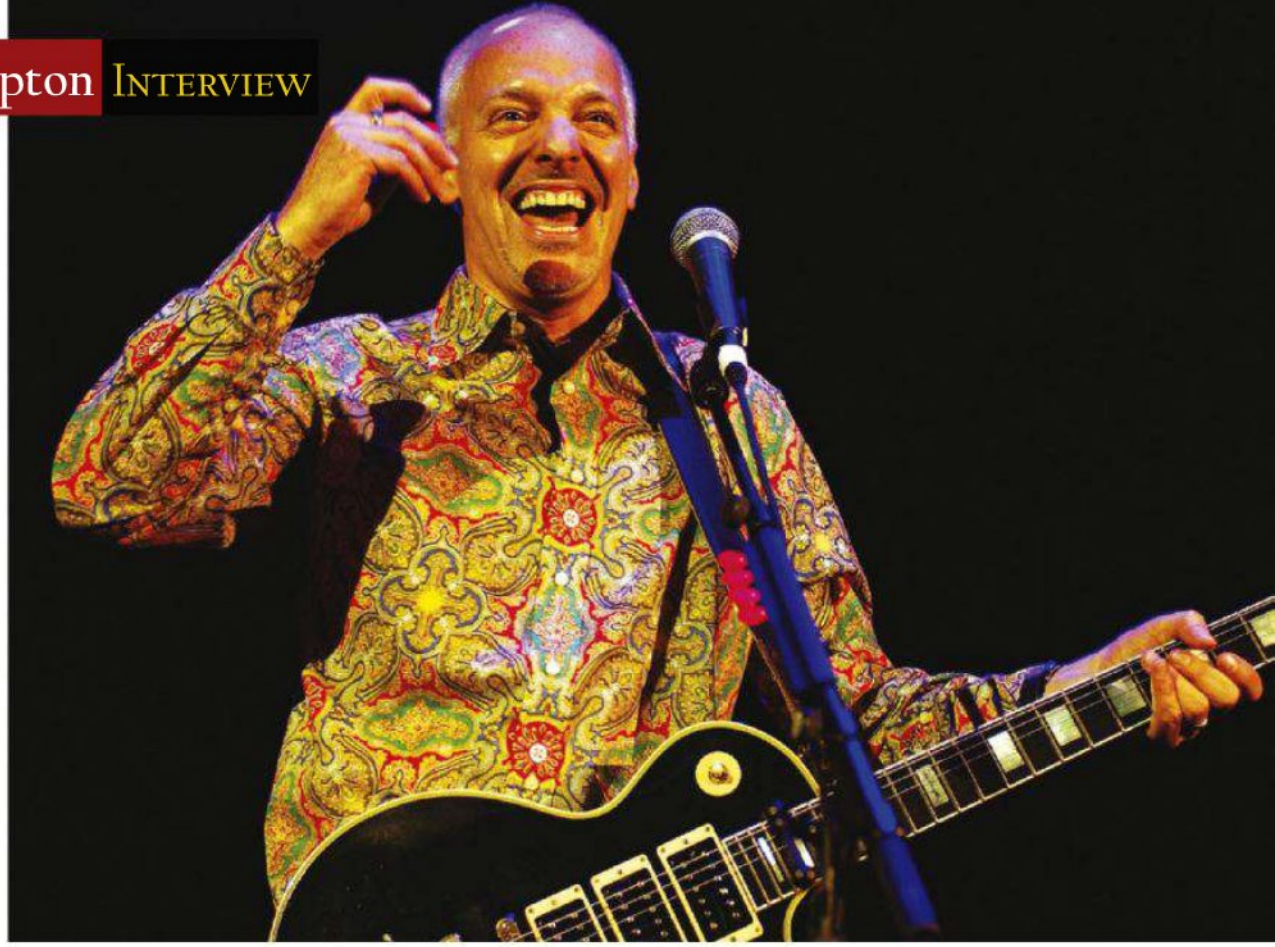


Photo: Angela Lubrano/Livepix

Having lost his beloved LP in a plane crash, Frampton now plays his Gibson signature replica of the original

'I started getting into what's going on in South America and in Africa,' he continues. 'You have a situation where terrorists – or whatever you want to call them – come into various areas, kill the parents and take the kids and brainwash them, and then you have 10 year-old kids with automatic weapons as killing machines. I was just opening my eyes to a lot of stuff I hadn't seen before.'

While on one side the autobiographical material is comfortable and endearing, the darker-edged subjects add an unsettling undertone; no doubt, bagging a Grammy gave Frampton the backbone to assert himself both lyrically and musically. The instrumental album that won the award – *Fingerprints* – left a ton of surplus material for him to rifle through, too.

'I stockpiled some ideas,' he confirms. 'There was a lot of co-writing with people I don't normally work with. I wanted to spread out, but I ended up choosing material from the people I usually write with. There's a bunch of songs there that could well see the light of day in the future... they just didn't fit on this album.'

Frampton is synonymous with the Les Paul, but he abandoned a succession of guitars before happening upon his famous three-humbucker LP Custom. 'When I was in the Herd I had a Black Beauty with the original soapbar pickups, but it was really heavy and it sounded muffled,' he remembers. 'I was also using a Strat, and that was just a complete other thing. It was alien to me. I tried to sell it to Tony Hicks [The Hollies] but he didn't want it either! He had the flu, and when I came in his flat he got up, tried it, said "no" and then went back to bed!

'In Humble Pie I had a Gretsch Duo Jet because I wanted to have the same guitar as Steve, and then I tried SGs. One day I swapped my SG for a 335 for two sets supporting the Grateful Dead. The first night, every solo I played just went *wooooooooo* [imitates feedback]. We stuffed it with foam, but nothing worked. I wanted my SG back so badly! After the show a guy came backstage and said "I couldn't help but notice you were having a little trouble. Want to try my Les Paul tomorrow?" I was hesitant, you know... but I was in a pickle. He met me the next day, opened it up and there's the three-pickup Les Paul. I just lost it. I was like, "Oh, my God!"

'I tried to sell Tony Hicks a Strat. He got up, tried it, said "no" and went back to bed'

'I used it for the next show and my feet never touched the ground. I came off, gave it back to him and asked if he'd consider selling it, and he said, "No, but I'd like to give it to you!" We've been in touch ever since. It's beautiful karma. The end story isn't so great, though...'

The 'end story' was a cargo plane crash in Venezuela in 1980 that spelt the end for the guitar. Softening the blow a little, his famous LP has been replicated by Gibson Custom Shop guru Mike Maguire, and Frampton couldn't be happier with the results, now using it as his number

Frampton's old Les Paul was painstakingly replicated by Mike Maguire of the Gibson Custom Shop

Funk Soul Brothers

The new album features a delectable cameo from legendary Motown musos the Funk Brothers. Frampton grew up with Motown ringing in his ears, so it was one more dream ticked off his list. The track, *Invisible Man*, was recorded in Nashville – the Brothers' chosen studio – with Frampton hoping to achieve a sound as close to the original Motown vibe as possible with two drumkits recorded simultaneously and everything live. 'People were flying in from all over the place, and lo and behold, all of a sudden I had a bunch of Funk Brothers!' he laughs. 'There's a film of it on my website. That's the take that actually went on the album. The engineer did his homework on how they mic'ed the drums on Motown. We tried to be as authentic as possible, and I think it came out pretty good.'

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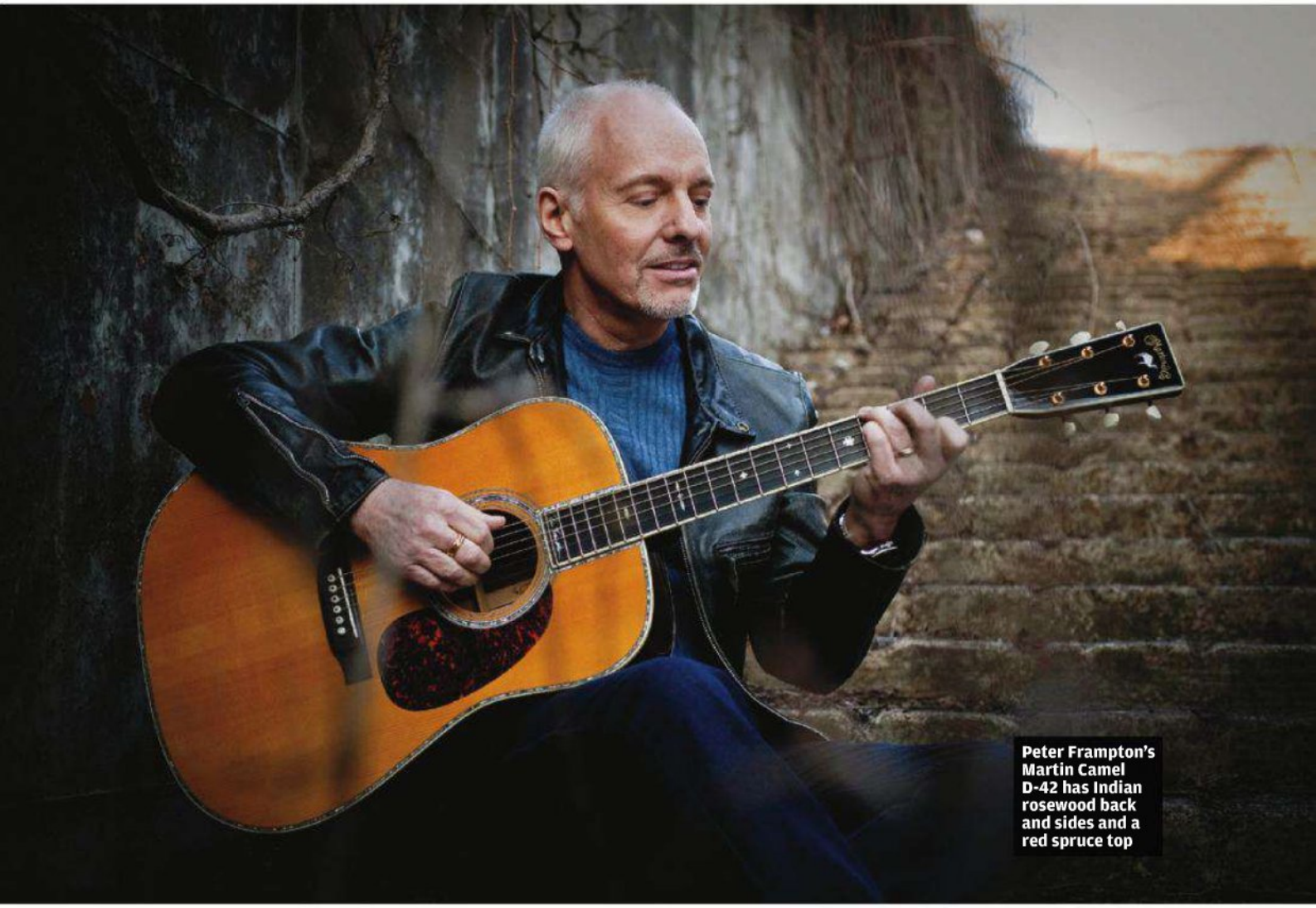

Peter Frampton's Martin Camel D-42 has Indian rosewood back and sides and a red spruce top

one. His love for Les Pauls has continued, and it isn't just his signature model that features on the album.

'I'd always liked Tom Murphy's work and Mike knew I liked the necks from the '60 sunbursts. Next thing this box arrives at the house and there's a '60 reissue Tom Murphy-aged Les Paul inside! So those two were on the album.' Extra light and shade came from a '61 SG, a quirky-sounding early '60s Fender Jaguar and a Strat modelled on Hank Marvin's original, built by the Fender Custom Shop.

Frampton's signature Gig FX Mega Wah replaced the Talkbox for his new album

The epic instrumental track *Suite Liberté* features this Strat, and Frampton took Marvin's advice to get the best results. 'The beginning section is the Hank Strat through this Echoes From The Past box which Hank told me about. Someone had laboriously gone through every Shadows song and modelled the multi-tap delays on Hank's old tape echoes – you dial up *Apache* and there it is! I first put those delays through a '59 tweed Fender Deluxe – probably my favourite amp – and it sounded unbelievable, so I put a digital recorder on the floor and recorded it. That spawned the first acoustic melody, and then I went to this other place and ended up with some blues.'

> *'My D-42 has a camel motif inside and on the head. I was looking for that lovely pure Stephen Stills top end'*

The acoustic sounds on the song come from Frampton's signature Martin Camel D-42. 'It's made from the best woods!' he says. 'When I left Humble Pie I bought a D-45 and used it on the *Frampton's Camel* record. It got stolen on tour, so that left a bad taste in my mouth. I told Dick Boak [artist relations at Martin] the story and he suggested a commemorative *Frampton's Camel* model, so there's a camel motif on the headstock and inside the guitar. I was looking for the Stephen Stills sound, that lovely pure top end. Dick said Adirondack spruce gives you the most top – a piece where the grain is tightest behind the bridge. It's a science!'

Frampton's son also contributed to *Road To The Sun*, with the pair writing the lyrics one line apiece. Is there another generation of Framptons set to enter the big, bad world of rock'n'roll music? 'Well, it's like what my mother used to say about me when I was his age,' grins Frampton. '"You can't stop Niagara Falls!"'

DID YOU KNOW?

- Peter Frampton recorded with Steve Marriott just before his death
- Frampton was once voted 'Face Of '68' by teen pop weekly Rave. The big time!
- Noted Pearl Jam drummer Matt Cameron guested on the new album
- Frampton has appeared in both The Simpsons and Family Guy

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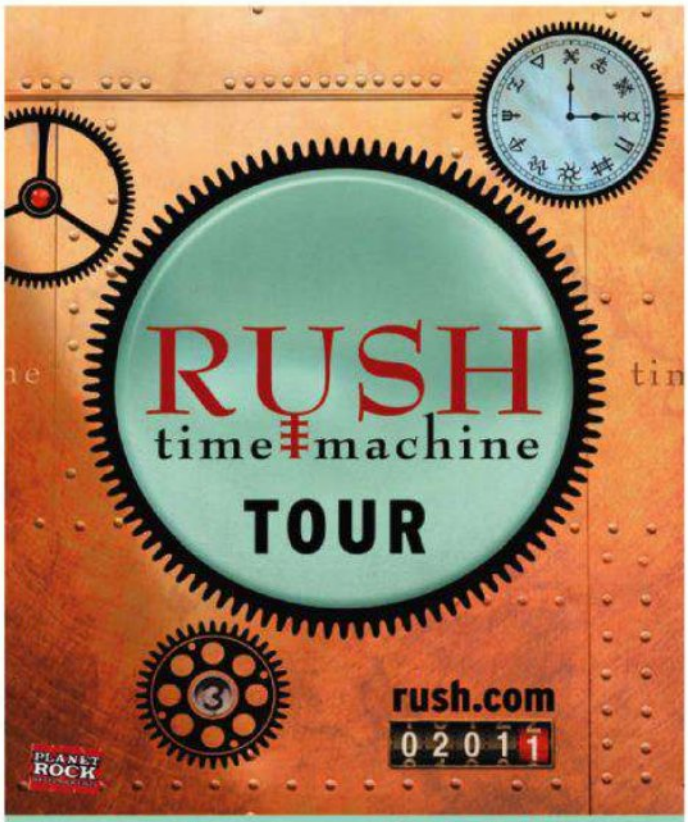

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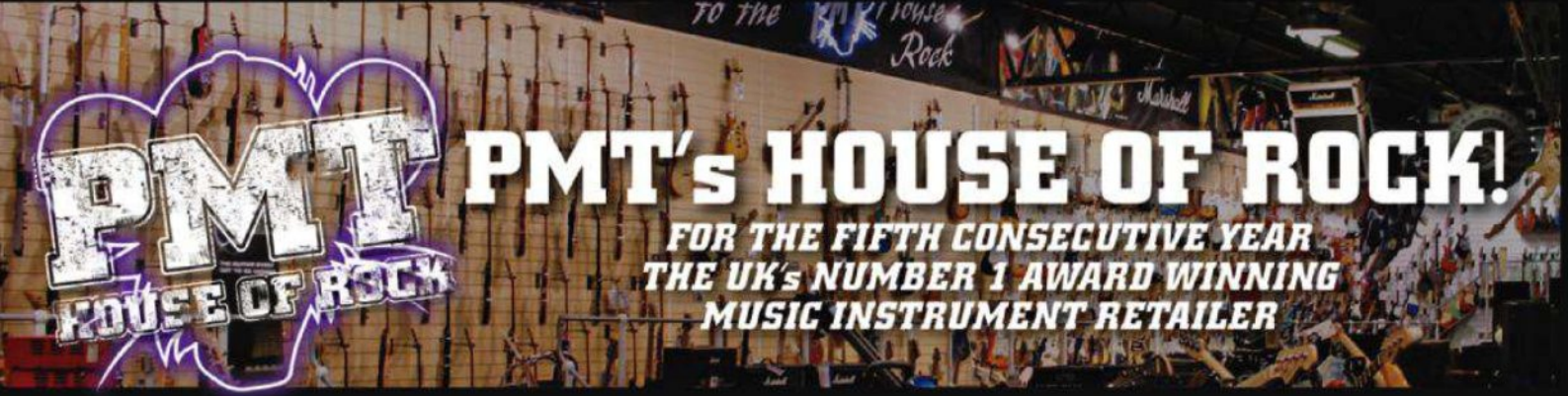

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Photo: Mike Prior

Rock Of Ages

Take one experienced rock troubadour, ex-Thunder man Luke Morley, and add fresh blood in the form of award-winning guitarist/singer Pete Shoulder, and you've got The Union. Interview by Martyn Casserly

It's been some year for The Union. Formed at the start of 2010 by ex-Thunder guitarist Luke Morley and former Winterville frontman Pete Shoulder, the blues/rock outfit wrote and recorded their self-titled debut album, embarked on various tours, appeared in the *Guitar & Bass* top albums of the year list, won a *Classic Rock* Best New Band award and managed to get through, erm, three drummers. Like all great 'overnight' successes, however, this one took years to achieve - and it all began, as these things so often do, with a mysterious package that arrived in the post.

'About 10 years ago a publisher friend of mine sent me a load of demos of people who were looking for co-writers,' explains Morley. 'Most of them were shit. The last one I came to didn't even have any writing on the case or anything, but when I stuck it on I heard this incredible voice and great guitar, and I thought "This is interesting." I rang up my friend, and he told me that he hadn't put any details down so that I wouldn't pre-judge it. I thought it had to be a black geezer, mid-30s, from around Chicago somewhere, but he said no - it was a young white lad from Durham who's 17! So I thought, right... I need to meet him.'

The pale Northerner in question turned out to be Pete Shoulder, who was signed up to a development deal with Sony. The two men met, became friends, and agreed to do some writing together while both continuing in their separate pursuits.

'Pete came down to mine,' Luke explains, 'and we wrote a song that appeared on the Thunder album. While I was off recording the album I suggested to Pete that he come along with his guitar and sing backing vocals on the song. He ended up singing backing on loads of stuff and drank all the beer! After that we kept in touch, and I helped him out here and there producing demos and Winterville opened for Thunder a few times. Then when Thunder stopped, we thought "Why not do something together?"'

'I thought the demo had to be by a black geezer, mid-30s, from Chicago – but it was a 17-year old from Durham!'

While Morley had been touring the big stages with Thunder, Shoulder had been busy honing his songwriting craft. Winterville's 2005 debut album *Everything In Moderation* was well received critically but failed to elevate the band to great heights. Solo work followed the band's demise, which was rewarded when Pete became one of only three Brits ever to win a WC Handy award, the others being Eric Clapton and Peter Green - not bad company to be keeping. The award was for the Best American Blues Song of the year and went to the Little Milton

Catalogue

THE UNION
THE UNION (2010)

Excellent debut album by the band featuring everything from bluesy rock stompers to soulful acoustic ballads. Should be on everyone's shelf

WINTERVILLE: EVERYTHING IN MODERATION (2005)

Pete Shoulder's previous band released this blues/rock collection five years ago, alerting the world to his impressive voice

THUNDER: 20 YEARS AND OUT (2009)

A goodbye to the fans from the classic British rockers with three live shows recorded in London, Manchester and Wolverhampton

Gear

Guitars:
Pete: Fender Telecaster, Gibson Les Paul Studio, Gibson acoustics
Luke: Gibson Les Paul and Flying V, Takamine acoustics

Amps:
Marshall Vintage Modern 100W heads and 4x12 cabs

Pedals:
Luke: Boss TR-2 tremolo

Luke's guitars of choice are either a Gibson Flying V or this sunburst Les Paul Standard

Pete's number one guitar is a black Les Paul Studio he's owned since his teens. A borrowed Tele came in for rhythm duties

track *Think Of Me*, which Pete co-wrote with Jon Tiven. 'It was cool really,' reveals the affable Shoulder. 'I co-wrote some songs in America with this producer and then about a year later he was working on an album with Little Milton. They were looking for some songs, so he played the ones we'd written and Milton ended up putting three of them on his album. He even left my guitar solos on!'

With snow causing havoc on the streets of Britain, Morley and Shoulder took solace in the comfort of a studio and set to work on what would become their debut album.

This Time Next Year

Last December The Union released the single *This Time Next Year* in aid of the charity Childline Rocks, of whom they are patrons. To promote it they journeyed to the wilds of Camber Sands to shoot a video, which proved just how committed they were in their support of the cause.

'Jesus, it was freezing!' recounts Pete. 'And the sand! We had the guitar cases sat behind the cameraman, but after about five minutes of filming you couldn't see them anymore because they were buried.'

'We ended up with sand in places that we didn't know had places,' Luke winces. 'In truth it only took a few hours but it felt like a very long day... probably not helped by the fact we both had hangovers from the Classic Rock awards. Still, it soon cured them.'

'The only criteria we gave to ourselves,' Luke says, 'was that the songs should be good. Whatever direction that took us in was where it took us. We didn't worry too much about making a blues album or a rock album... we just wanted to make a good one.'

The band incorporated some of Shoulder's solo material into the mix and also re-worked some of the songs they'd already written together. One example of their collaborative power is the darkly jazzy *Easy Street*. 'I'd helped Pete with the demo of that,' says Morley. 'It started off as an acoustic tango... a strange song, really. We thought we'd vamp it up for the album, so we put some drums on it, played around and thought "Yeah, this works." The same was true with *Black Monday*, a jazzy kind of song that we wrote. Pete's a big Tom Waits fan, so there's a bit of that lurking in there.'

The Union lived up to their name and worked hard together to produce enough songs to finish the album, a process that took a surprising amount of time. 'I reckon it was about 15 days,' says Peter. 'The whole thing just seemed easy. It was going so well after the first day that I started getting suspicious, thinking "This can't be right." But the fact we were doing most of it pretty much live meant that it just came very naturally. I think there's even a couple of songs where we left the scratch guitars from the backing tracks in the final mix. We had no click tracks or anything like that because we wanted to get that loose, natural feel.'

'There's only one song in standard tuning. Live, it's a nightmare'

Pete's interest in Americana and fingerpicking also led him to explore some unusual tunings. 'I think there's only one song on the album in standard tuning!' he laughs. 'Live, it's a nightmare. The one I use mainly on the acoustic is a double drop D, which I then tune down a tone so really it's a double drop C. There's a couple of G tunings, like on *Watch The River Flow*, but my favourite one appears on the album's last song, *The Space Between Us*, which is EDGGAD. It adds a really nice mood and atmosphere to the track. I'm always messing around with tunings, and I just stumbled across it.'

To play the songs live in their original form would have resulted in a set-list resembling an algebra test, so the

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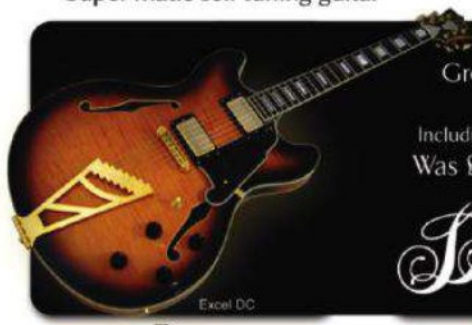

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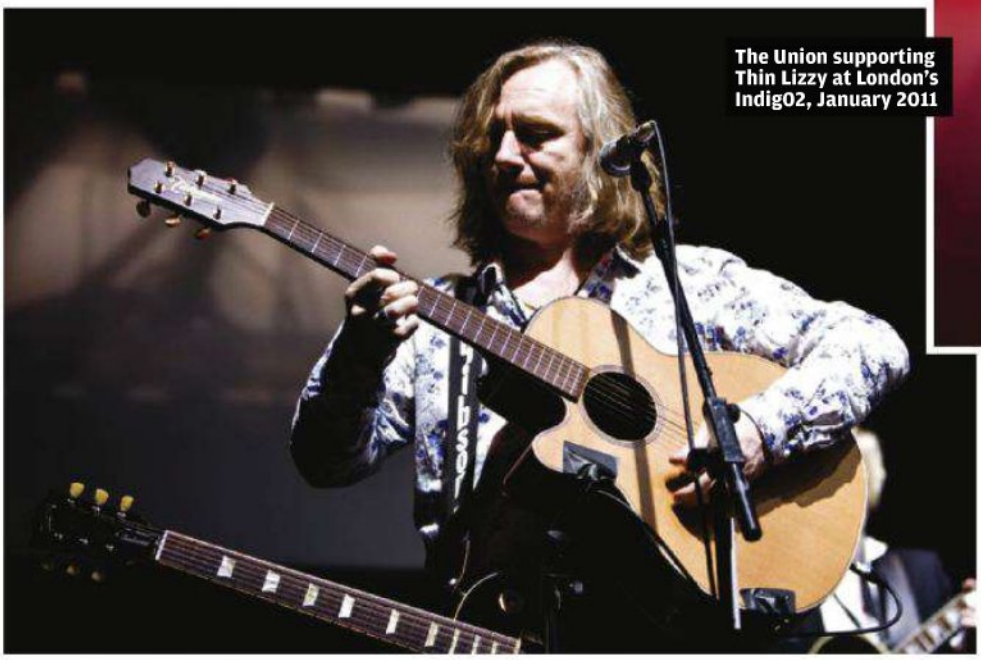
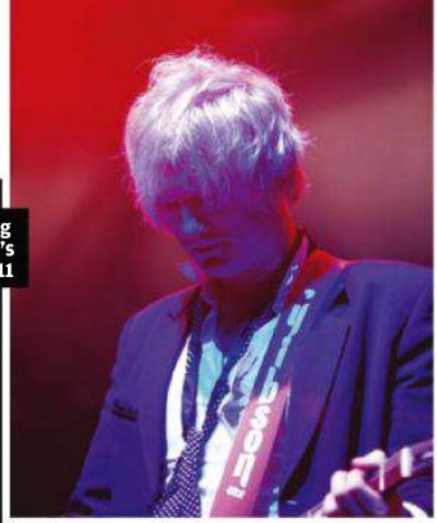


The Union supporting Thin Lizzy at London's Indig02, January 2011



band worked hard to fit them to the fast moving environment of a stage. 'The first gig we did,' Luke recounts, 'we thought, how on earth are we going to do this? There were a gazillion guitar changes, and that was just the first number! But over time we've adapted the tunings to make it simpler, otherwise it would have been a 45 minute set with five minutes of music and the rest spent tuning guitars.

'It does mean that we tend to group certain songs together in our set, but that seems to work out quite well and within the natural ebb and flow of a gig there's still time to do guitar changes while we talk to the audience. You'd hardly notice it now.'

Where alternate tunings are found you can usually expect slide guitars to follow, something that proves true on the track *Holy Roller*. But The Union's unorthodox methods aren't confined to just the guitar.

'The kick drum on that track,' continues Morley, 'is actually a slamming door which we recorded in the place where we did the demos. For the snare we just got someone to go in a room and clap their hands. Pete said he was after a chain-gang type sound and I think we got it.'

The album's full-bodied guitar tones were achieved with some old faithfuls. 'I use a Les Paul Studio that I've had since I was about 12 for the live stuff,' explains Pete, 'but for most of my rhythm parts on the album I used an old borrowed Tele plugged into a Marshall Vintage Modern.' Luke's a fan of the same amps. 'They're brilliant,' he enthuses. 'When I first plugged into one of them I just thought this is absolutely perfect. I was very lucky that Steve Dawson, the guy who designed them, contacted us in the Thunder days and told us that he was looking to design the ultimate classic rock amp, and would we come down and try one out? We did, and then told him not to touch anything – it was just fabulous. Everything sounds good through them.'

'Really good rock'n'roll has room for everything to breathe. With every overdub you lose something'

'Steve keeps telling me to try the acoustic through them,' interjects Peter. 'He reckons they sound brilliant. Apparently Jerry Cantrell is doing that a lot now too.'

Luke's choice of weapons range from a Tele for rhythm to a Les Paul or Flying V for the solos, with hardly a pedal in sight apart from a Boss tremolo that appears the beginning of *Easy Street*. The band also shows an equally simple approach to how the guitar parts were shared out.

'When we were recording the parts it was usually a case of whoever was sitting nearest the guitar at the time did the playing,' laughs Luke. 'We're both pretty laid back so there was none of that "No, this is my solo" rubbish. I'm too old for that shit. We can both play, so it just came down to who was nearest... or less drunk.

'The thing about the album that I'm most proud of,' he continues, 'is that everything that's there is helping the song in some way. All the textures, from banjos to Hammond organs, are complementing the overall tune – and that's what it's all about, really.

'I don't think any of us are really guitar players' guitar players, if you know what I mean. We don't sit around practicing our scales for hours. We're people who come from the point of view of the song and the whole thing. A lot of albums from the '80s and '90s have five guitars all playing the same thing, and we wanted to get away from that. I think really good rock'n'roll, whether it's the Beatles or Led Zeppelin, has plenty of room for everything to breath. Every time you put another overdub on, you lose something... so if it's not really important, then why do it?'

With the recession still in full swing and the music industry seeing a general drop in sales, The Union have found that labels are reluctant to invest in new bands – even award-winning ones. But rather than wait for their big break to come to them, they're out there busily working for it.

'The negative side of doing it yourself is the lack of money,' admits Luke. 'Every decision you make on marketing budgets, tour costs, production and so on becomes very important.

'But having the control is priceless. You have to be realistic and say that at this point in the game it's not gonna be the Ritz, it'll be a Travel Lodge if you're lucky... but that's okay. The album is selling well, fans are coming to the gigs, and if we can tough out the first two years then I think we'll be alright.'

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2011 they've already supported Thin Lizzy and will tour with Whitesnake in June

Pete has blogged about how to find 'fine dining at a petrol station'

As well as writing songs and playing guitar, Luke Morley also drives the van

For videos about the making of the album see www.theunionline.com

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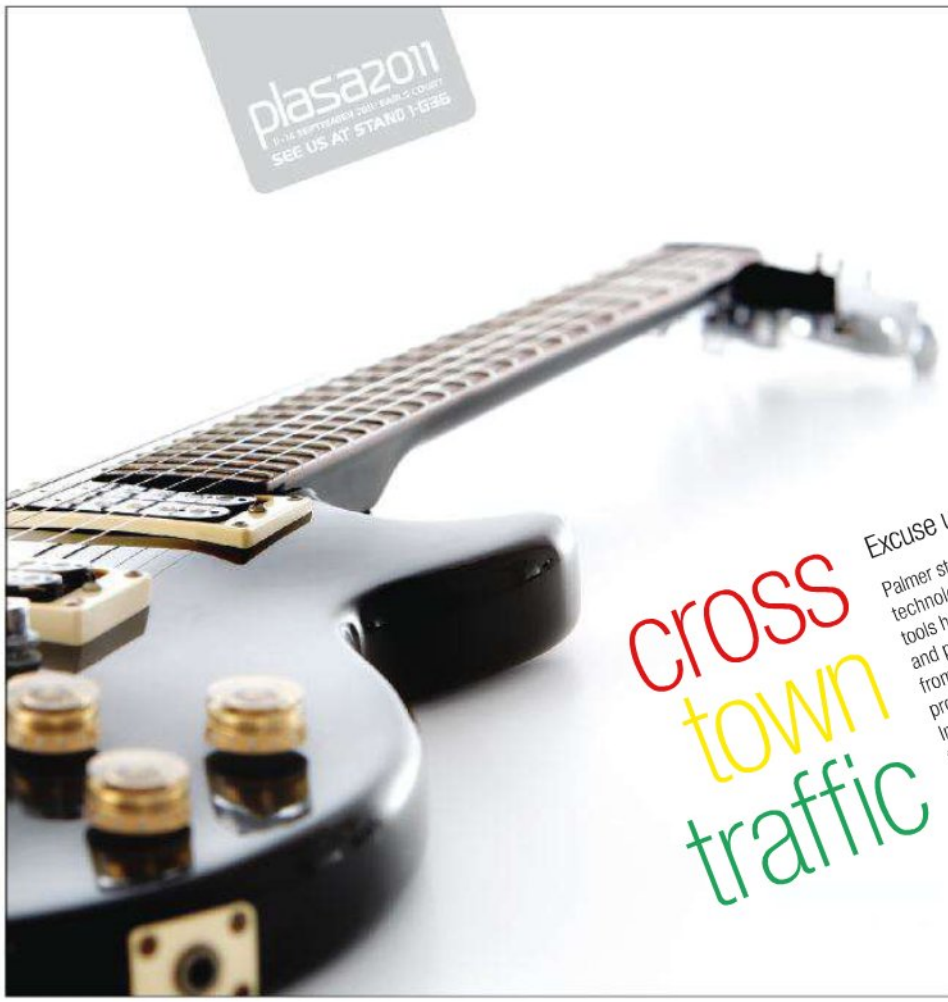

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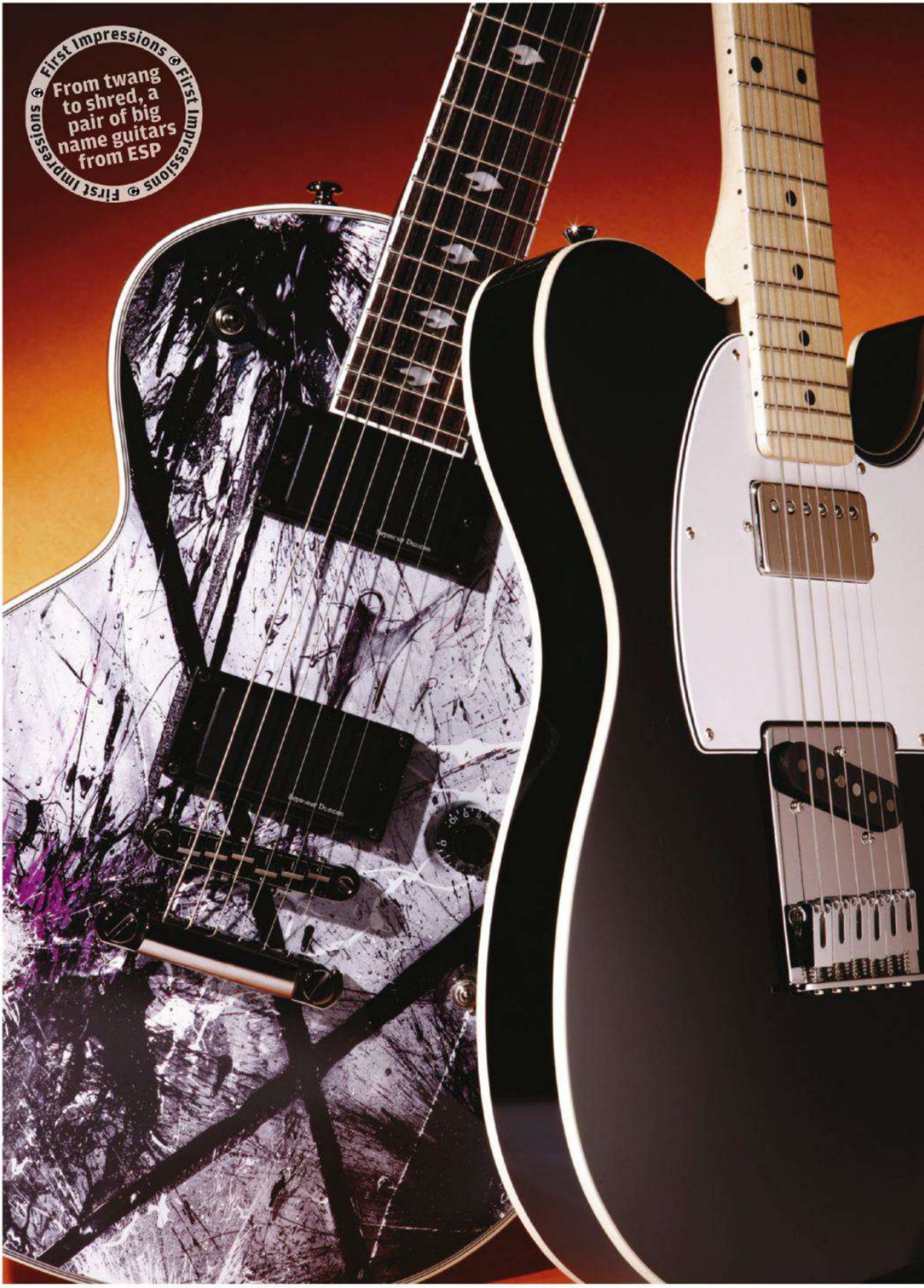

First Impressions
From twang to shred, a pair of big name guitars from ESP

Price: £1949

From Japan come a traditional-style solidbody for the beloved Stones guitarist and a surprising single-cut for Gus G of Firewind and Ozzy Osbourne. Review by Huw Price

ESP

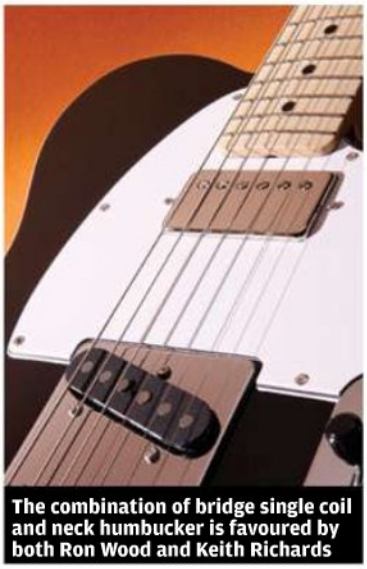
Ron Wood & LTD GUS-600EC

ESP dates back to 1975, when Hisatake Shibuya opened Electric Sound Products in Tokyo, moving from making aftermarket parts to highly-rated guitars under the ESP and Navigator names. ESP soon acquired an identity of its own and now has a wide range of signature models and endorsees, mostly from rock and metal. Whether your flavour is threatening riffage or well-lubricated licks, ESP has the answer with two very different guitars, one for Euro metaller Gus G and one for Ron Wood.

ESP RON WOOD

Ronnie Wood has had his own ESP for a long time - and assuming he can take his pick of any guitar, there must be something special going on. Made in Japan, it has a bound alder body and a satin-finished maple neck with 22 frets. This neck profile is U-shaped, and it's chunky without feeling fat - in fact it feels like a late '50s Gibson neck. It's such an absolute doozie, it's hard to stop playing. The construction and control layout are fairly standard; the strings pass through the body, but the bridge has six saddles and no sides to obstruct your pick. Gotoh makes the vintage-style tuners, and the pickups are ESP's TS-120 at the bridge and an LH-200 humbucker at the neck.

SOUNDS

This is a guitar that does all the basics very well. The bridge setting has all the bright, poppy and snappy character you might want from a classic guitar of this type. The neck pickup has a thicker and gutsier tone, but the volume levels balance out quite nicely. There's quite a contrast between these pickups, but that expanded tonal range is what this configuration is all about. So country twang, Stonesy riffing, bluesy lead and jazzy chords are all on the menu combined with an easy playing feel, accurate intonation and stable tuning.

The combination of bridge single coil and neck humbucker is favoured by both Ron Wood and Keith Richards

With a bound alder body and a bolt-on maple neck with a skunk stripe, it's like a '50s-style Custom

The Ron Wood's chunky U-shaped profile makes the neck feel like a late-'50s Gibson. It's such an absolute doozie, it's hard to stop playing

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	19/20
Playability	19/20
Sound	16/20
Value for money	14/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	**83%**

Good for... indie, blues, rock, slide, country, funk

Look elsewhere... death metal, shredding

FACTFILE

RON WOOD

Description: Solidbody electric guitar. Made in Japan

Price: £1949 inc. case

Build: Alder body with bolt-on one-piece maple neck, 22 frets, individual saddles, Gotoh tuners

Electrics : ESP TS-120 bridge single coil, LH-200 neck humbucker, master volume and tone controls with three-way pickup selector

Left-hander: No

Finish: Black, fiesta red

Scale Length: 648mm/25.5"

Neck width:
Nut 42mm
12th fret 52mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 19mm
12th fret 22mm

String spacing:
Nut 35mm
Bridge 54mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 3.0mm

Weight: 3.75kg/8.25lbs

THE COMPETITION

FENDER
Vintage Hot Rod 52 Tele

Premium ash body, one-piece maple neck, compensated brass saddles and a Seymour Duncan mini-humbucker in the neck. One of the very best Telecasters we've ever reviewed

RRP: £1576

G&L
Tribute ASAT Bluesboy Semi-Hollow

With a G&L AS4250B alnico humbucker in the neck and a G&L Magnetic Field Design single coil in the bridge, the Bluesboy has a swamp ash body with a hard rock maple neck and individually machined brass saddles. High quality at an affordable price

RRP: £799

Price: £1049

FACTFILE

LTD GUS-600EC

Description: Solidbody electric guitar. Made in Korea

Price: £1049

Build: mahogany body with maple through-neck, 22 fret rosewood fingerboard, Tonepros bridge and stop tailpiece, ESP locking tuners

Electrics: Two Seymour Duncan Blackout humbuckers, master volume control with three-way pickup selector, battery on/off switch

Left-hander: No

Finish: Custom graphic finish front and headstock

Scale Length: 636mm/25"

Neck width:
Nut 42mm
12th fret 53mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 20mm
12th fret 23mm

String spacing:
Nut 34.5mm
Bridge 50.5mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 3.0mm

Weight: 3.75kg/8.25lbs

Contact: ESP Guitars UK
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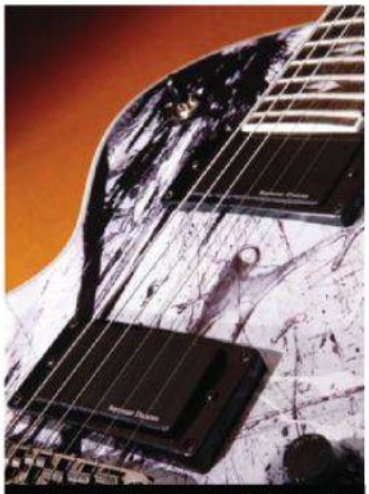
The ESP locking tuners have led to reports of neck-heaviness from some users but we had no trouble



Active Duncans, Tonepro bridge – it's a quality spec, and the Ullaeus graphic is right up to the minute

The ultra-hot pickups give huge dynamic range, tight clear bass and fast attack, but the guitar's woodiness still provides plenty of character

LTD GUS-600EC

Following in the footsteps of Tony Iommi, Randy Rhoads and Zakk Wylde would be a big ask for anyone, but Gus G had no trouble stepping up to work with Ozzy Osbourne. As Firewind guitarist he has already had a couple of 'random star' shaped LTD signature models, but he decided something more Lester-like would be better for his latest, biggest gig.

The GUS-600EC took its form from ESP/LTD's Eclipse, but there are several unique features. Gus is pals with Swedish video director and rock artist Patric Ullaeus, and he supplied the graphic finish. Although not normally an active guy, Gus opted for Seymour Duncan Blackouts. He never uses tone controls, so there was no need for one. You do get a three-way selector and a volume control, along with a battery kill switch, and all three are recessed into the carved top.

Under the matching top and headstock graphics is a mahogany body and a 'set-through' maple neck. The only timber on show is the rosewood fingerboard, and it looks gorgeous with pearl inlays. Like the headstock and body, the neck has cream binding and the black chrome ESP locking tuners match the locking Tonepro tun-o-matic bridge and stop tailpiece.

The GUS-600EC is actually lighter than the Ronnie, but despite the chunky locking tuners there's barely any neck-heaviness and it behaves impeccably whether you're playing in a seated or standing position. Factor in the medium thin U-profile neck and the tapered neck joint and I'd have to say this one is built for comfort as well as speed.

SOUNDS

Those of a suspicious disposition may wonder what they're trying to hide under that graphic finish, but after one strum none of that will matter. The unplugged tone is staggeringly good, with a loud, even resonance and superb natural sustain. It's everything you could hope for in a mahogany-bodied set-neck guitar. Starting out clean, the pickups have real clarity and dynamic range. They combine the transparency of underwound vintage-style PAFs with an almost hi-fi upper frequency sheen – but the onboard preamps generate output levels that can pummel the front end of any amp, so you get ultra-hot pickup power with a huge dynamic range, tight clear bass, lightning-fast attack and no muddiness whatsoever. Better still, in some guitars these qualities can make things sterile and generic, but the GUS-600EC's inherent woodiness chimes in to provide plenty of harmonic character.

VERDICT

The Ron Wood ESP virtually plays itself, sounds very sweet and stays in tune perfectly – but despite its sublime neck, great looks and very high build quality, it's somewhat devoid of mojo. This is a guitar you'd probably buy with your head rather than your heart. You certainly wouldn't regret it, but at this price there are any number of options out there, including the custom-made variety. And the Gus G? LTD guitars have been around since 1996 and they are no longer merely affordable versions of the Japanese-made ESPs. Some are very affordable, but there are some high end models too. Obviously the GUS-600EC falls into the latter category, and it's a no-compromise guitar. It goes from clean to crunch with poise and refinement, but there's nothing classic or vintage about the sound; this is very much a contemporary instrument with a feel and tone to match. So long as you understand that, and you can live without a tone control, it's an absolute joy. In fact, it's pretty remarkable.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	19/20
Playability	19/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	15/20
Vibe	19/20
TOTAL	**90%**

Good for... rock, metal, contemporary clean

Look elsewhere... woman tone, vintage warmth

THE COMPETITION

SCHECTER
Hellraiser Solo 6

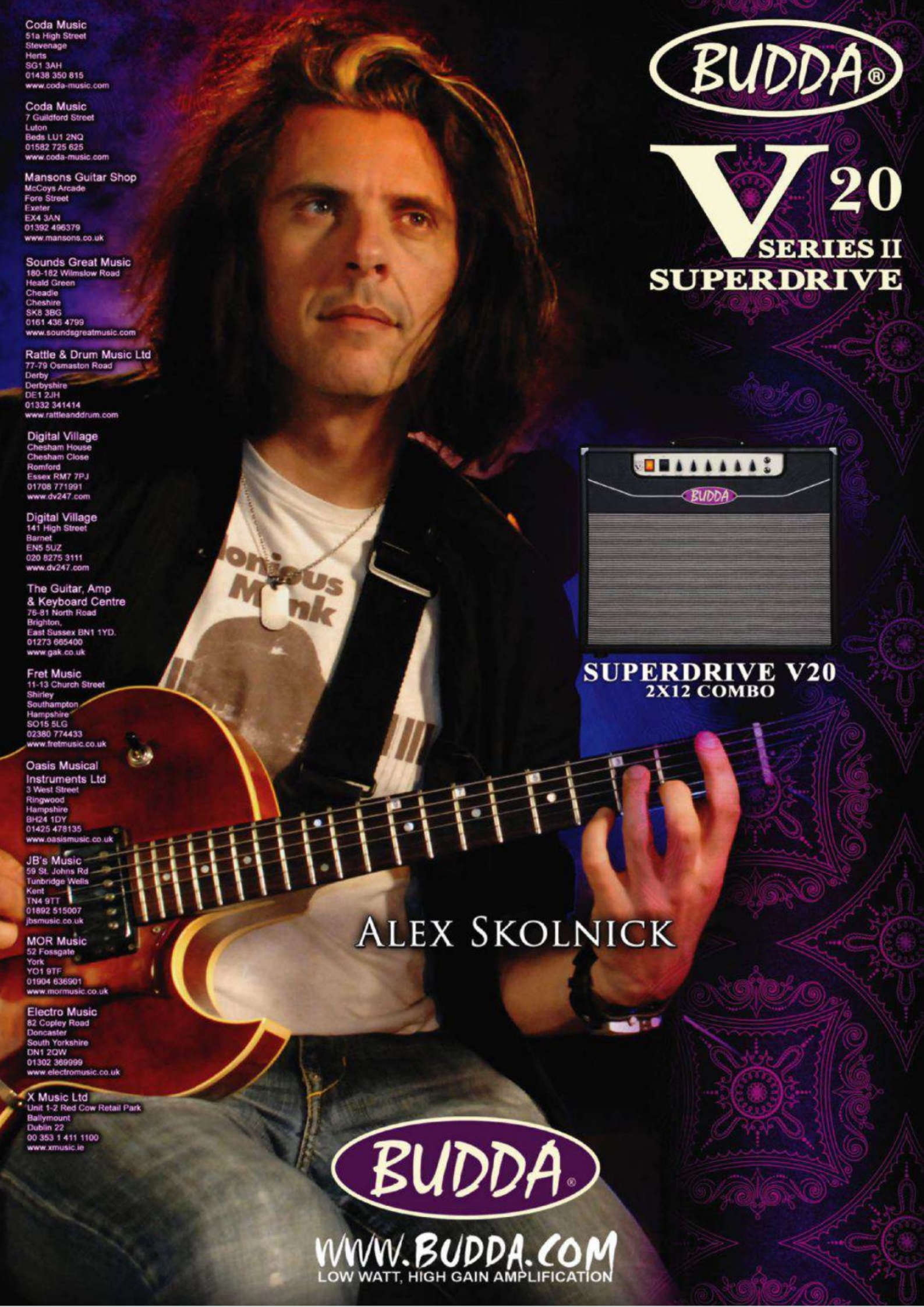
A mahogany solidbody with a three-piece mahogany set neck, 24-fret rosewood fingerboard, gothic cross inlays and EMG 81TW and EMG 89TW humbuckers with a Tonepro bridge and black hardware

RRP: £766

GIBSON
ZAKK WYLDE BFG BULLSEYE

This LP features a rough-hewn bookmatched maple top, a rounded '50s-spec neck with ebony fingerboard and EMG 81 and 85 humbucking pickups. It also has Wylde's trademark bullseye graphic over a satin natural nitro finish

RRP: £1399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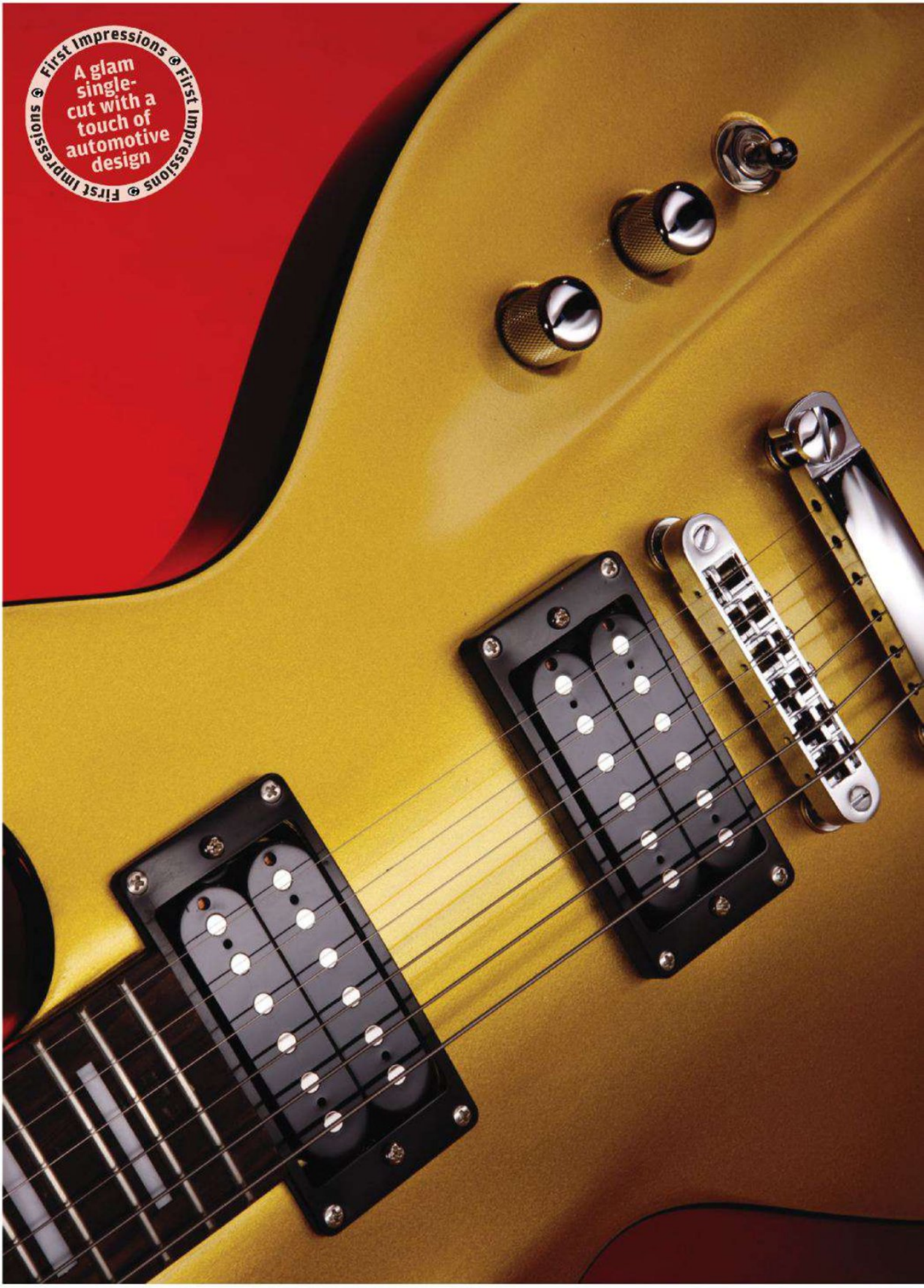
First Impressions

A glam single-cut with a touch of automotive design



Price: £225

Just released at NAMM in January, the super-affordable Lodestone Pulse breathes new life into a familiar format and adds lashings of metallic gold. Review by Martyn Casserly

Lodestone

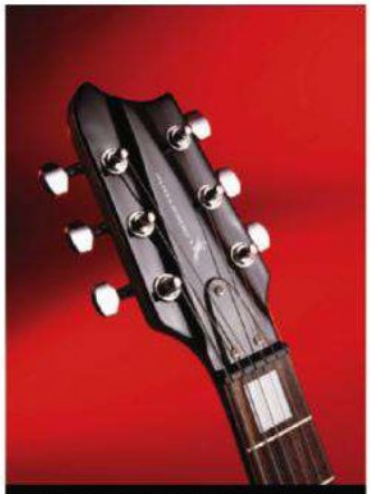
Pulse

One of the latest companies to fly the flag of British guitar making is Chelmsford-based Lodestone. The design work and company headquarters are situated in Essex but these particular models come via China, as is now so often the case. Lodestone's quirky take on a certain California-born classic has already caught the eye, and now they're returning with a similar re-imagining of another industry standard. The Pulse is its name, so have Lodestone got their finger on it?

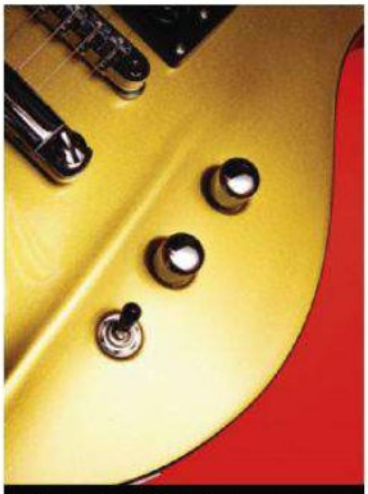
PULSE

The first thing that comes to mind when slipping the reasonably weighty Pulse from its gigbag is 'My, my, that's gold alright.' Gold it is indeed... and there's so much of it. Not content with merely coating the body in gold, Lodestone have covered both the back and neck, lending the Pulse a Bond girl aura. The only places spared are the edge binding on the body and the face of the headstock, which are black. Close inspection reveals some uneven finishing here, with areas suffering from paint bleed and lines that are a bit wobbly, but it won't spoil the look from a distance.

One of the unique features of the Pulse is the pair of ridges on the body. They hold no functional purpose at all, but they imbue the guitar with a novel take on a very well-known shape. Whether it works or not will very much be in the eye of the beholder, but isn't that kind of the point when it comes to design?



Lodestone's signature contours are neatly carried over to the headstock. Fingerboard has big block markers



Simple master volume and master tone instead of the traditional volume and tone for each pickup

One of the Pulse's unique features is the pair of ridges on the body, imbuing the guitar with a novel take on a very well-known shape

Lurking under the paint is a nato wood body, a material being increasingly used by factories in China and the Far-East as a more affordable alternative to mahogany. The neck is also fashioned from this South American resident, with a more traditional rosewood fingerboard taking care of the playing surface, adorned with 22 frets and block abalone inlays. The small '60s-style neck profile makes it easy to play, and it'll be appreciated by younger players and those with small hands. Meanwhile the rest of us can also blaze about in a perfectly happy manner.

Hardware is pretty much as you'd expect - chrome Schaller-style tuners, stoptail and bridge, master volume and tone. The twin humbuckers are uncovered for that raw look, but perhaps if they were chrome-covered they'd make the appearance just that bit more cohesive, albeit in a more vintage fashion.

FACTFILE

PULSE

Description: Solidbody electric guitar. Made in China

Price: £225

Build: Nato body, nato neck, rosewood fretboard with 22 frets and abalone block inlays. Chrome Schaller-style machineheads, stoptail piece and bridge

Electrics: Twin humbuckers, master volume, tone and three-way selector switch

Left-Handers: No

Finishes: Gold, tobacco sunburst, honey sunburst and matt black

Scale length: 629mm/24.75"

Neck width:
Nut 43mm
12th fret 53mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 22mm
12th fret 25mm

String spacing:
Nut 37mm
Bridge 52mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.5mm
12th fret bass 3.5mm

Weight: 3.6kg/8lbs

Contact:
Ashdown Music
01245 441155
www.lodestoneguitars.com

THE COMPETITION

VINTAGE
V100 MRJBM

LP-style goldtop with reliced look and plenty of grunt under the hood. Vintage does it again

RRP: £359

TOKAI
UALS48

Forget the terrible name, this is a proper old rocker with great looks at an affordable price

RRP: £325

EPIPHONE
SLASH LES PAUL GOLDTOP

A budget signature model for the behatted one. Great tones, cool looks. It was a limited run, so shop around

RRP: approx £700

Strapped on the Lodestone Pulse feels comfortable and well-balanced, although it isn't a lightweight guitar. This substance proves encouraging when you strum the guitar acoustically and hear a nice bright *briiing* that should transfer well when the electricity is flowing.

SOUNDS

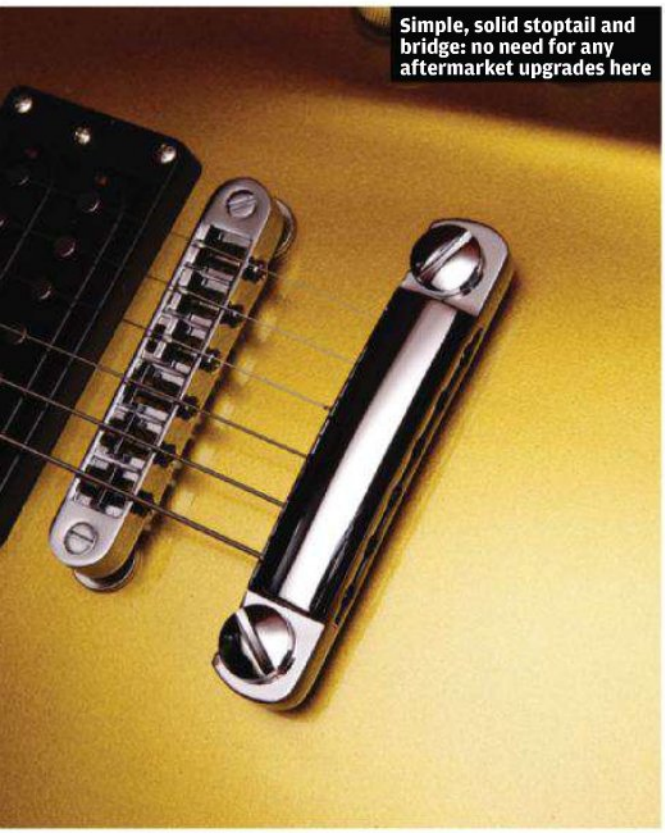
Plugging into the clean channel on a Laney VC15, the neck pickup is open and clear with enough body to encourage breaking into some old soul and Motown riffs. The bass end feels a little thin in comparison to some LP-type guitars that have passed through the office in the past, but this helps keep the tone tight and prevents any flabbiness when down low. Clean blues tones are quick to find, with good sustain on bends; generally, the cleaner side of life sounds pretty good.

Pushing the amp into a slight breakup and moving to the mixed setting gives us a percussive and well-balanced rhythm tone that would sit well in a mix. At a push, it could even make do for acoustic parts at a gig where you don't want to swap guitars.

Putting some medium overdrive on the amp finds the guitar's sweet spot. Chords sound grainy and crunchy with just the right amount of growly throat to leatherise your trousers and make your stance wider. There's a Black Crowes aspect to the tone which will find favour with classic rockers and those who like their music a little blue. Big bends do cause the tuning to slip slightly and the machineheads feel a little imprecise, but a little lubrication on the nut would most likely sort this out.

We're reminded of the rare 'all-gold' LPs of the early '50s. A curvy chamfer helps reduce body bulk at the heel

Medium overdrive finds the Pulse's sweet spot. Chords are crunchy, with just the right amount of growly throat to leatherise your trousers



Simple, solid stoptail and bridge: no need for any aftermarket upgrades here

Throwing some higher gain at the Pulse is a pleasing experience, with that tighter bottom end coming to the fore and adding a sharper edge. Guns N'Roses sounds are in the ballpark, and if you dig in then the solo tones here are very good and could make a pub hero out of you yet. Pushing the guitar to the very end of the scale and dropping the tuning does finally get the better of the pickups, with clarity dropping away, but it still does a good job of generating an angry roar.

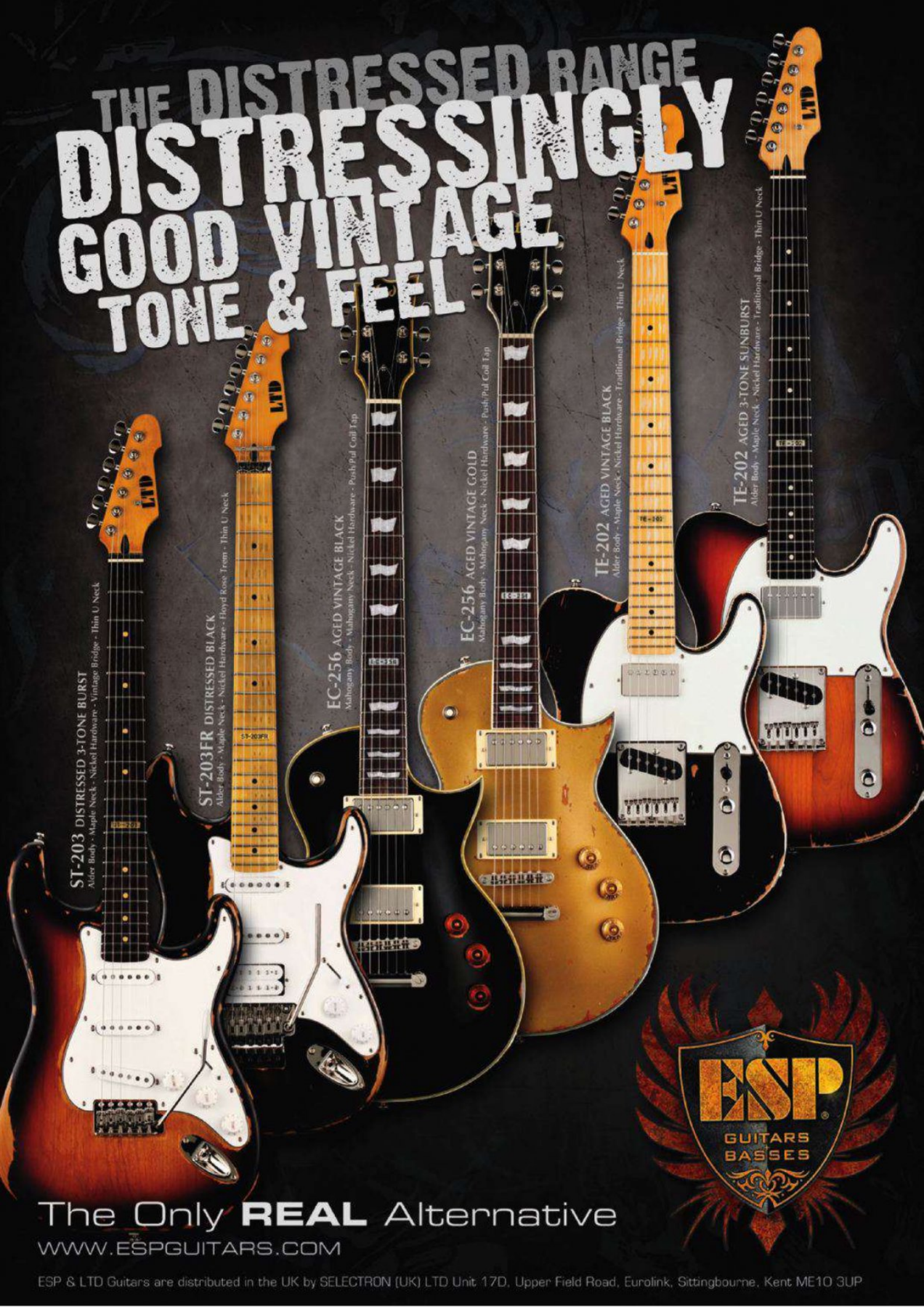
VERDICT

The Pulse comes into the very competitive budget end of the guitar market with a fair few interesting things to offer. Its unusual curves will no doubt appeal to younger players who fancy something a bit different from the standard single-cut guitar. The colour will also turn a few heads (or stomachs, depending on your proclivities), but for the more subtle players out there Lodestone also offer classic sunburst finishes as well as a cool-looking matt black option. There are a few niggles - mainly the slightly scruffy paintwork and a few tuning issues that would likely be sorted by a set-up - but in the end the Pulse is a very likeable guitar. The pickups are well voiced for modern and classic styles, the construction is sound, and you know that after a bit of time playing it in it would make a decent gigging guitar. It might be a bit more Beijing than Basildon when it comes to the truly British stakes, but it's good to see the likes of Lodestone throwing a different option into the ring. It'll make a solid, enjoyable first guitar for someone starting out and will be a fine accomplice for those important early miles on the journey.

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	16/20
Playability	15/20
Sound	17/20
Value for money	16/20
Vibe	16/20
TOTAL	**80%**

Good for... budget LP-style duties

Look elsewhere... for higher quality at a price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First Impressions

At last, the Appetite For Destruction signature amp

Price: £1199

The details of Slash's 'Appetite' amp are unknown, but an undaunted Marshall has released a 100W signature head with some eyebrow-raising features. Review by Richard Purvis

Marshall

AFD100

What do we know about Slash? He was born in London, he grew up in Stoke, he wears a top hat and his name is another word for a wee-wee. More significantly, we know that in the mid-'80s he joined an LA rock band called Guns N'Roses, whose debut album *Appetite For Destruction* turned them into epoch-defining stars and their shaggy lead guitarist into something of an icon.

Slash got his own signature Marshall in 1996, and that would be a nice place to end our story, but there are other things we don't know so much about. We don't know for sure what guitar or amp he used on that 28-million-selling record - whose thick, searing lead tones are generally considered to be something of a landmark. This, with a little help from the internet, is how myths begin.

We do know the guitar was a US-made copy of a late-'50s Les Paul. Gibson released a replica of the replica last year and it went down well. The Marshall, however, is more tricky. It was a hire amp; nobody knows where it ended up, and Slash himself seems unsure of precisely what it was. The current thinking seems to favour a modified mid-'70s 1959 model, so that's what has been used as the basis of the long-awaited Appetite For Destruction signature head, designed in collaboration with Slash himself. Also included is a second 'mode', known as #34, which knocks out the Appetite amp's extra gain stage and aims for a tone closer to the modded JCM800 he's been using since.

Lifting off the padded dustcover, we're presented with a full-size head in the classic Marshall style with a mean, monochrome look. The silver panel has Slash's doodle on the left and skinny gothic lettering that recalls the original album artwork. There are toggle switches at either end for engaging the FX loop and hopping between modes, and the other newcomer on the panel is a Power control, which acts as a second master volume using what Marshall calls 'Electronic Power Attenuation' - reducing voltages within the circuit to lower the output to as little as 0.1W. It turns like a standard pot but actually goes through 20-odd stepped settings, which have no relation to the 11 dot markers around it. Surely a series of indents, with the wattages marked on the panel, would have been more user-friendly? The back panel has sockets for the footswitch and FX loop, plenty of speaker output options, two autographs (Slash's on top, Jim Marshall's below) and some slightly alarming bias-related business that we'll come to in a sec.

Slash's Marshall was a hire amp, possibly a modified mid-'70s 1959, so that's what's been used as the basis for the signature head

Four small machine screws, held by metal inserts in the side battens, keep the back cover in place. Behind it lie four 6550 valves and five ECC83s, all Marshall-branded. Removing some chunkier screws will allow us a peek beneath the chassis, and here we're greeted by a veritable meadow of green. One large PCB runs virtually from tranny to tranny (both Dagnalls), and all nine valve bases are mounted directly onto it. There are four smaller boards connected to that by a tidy explosion of blue wires. No vintage pretensions here.

SOUNDS

Hang on, we have to wait three minutes before we can hear it. The biasing, you see. Marshall recommends that, having fine-tuned the desired current using the trimpot on the back panel - with reference to the chart in the manual - you go

FACTFILE

AFD100

Specs: 100W head with 5 x ECC83 and 4 x 6550 valves. Made in UK

Price: £1199

Control panel: On/off, standby and FX loop switches; Power (attenuation), Presence, Bass, Middle, Treble, Master and Gain controls; #34/AFD mode switch; high and low inputs

Rear panel: Speaker outputs for 1 x 4 ohms or 2 x 8 ohms, 1 x 8 ohms or 2 x 16 ohms, 1 x 16 ohms; FX loop in, out and return level; bias adjustment trimpot; footswitch input

Dimensions: 74.5cm wide, 29cm high, 23cm deep

Weight: 22.4kg/49lbs

Accessories: Footswitch for FX loop on/bypass and #34/AFD mode (included)

Contact:
Marshall Amplification
01908 375411
www.marshallamps.com

THE COMPETITION

CARVIN
Legacy VL100
Steve Vai's EL34-powered signature amp has clean and overdrive channels plus reverb
RRP: £1182

RANDALL
RM100KH
Metallica idol Kirk Hammett's amp of choice is a three-channel beast powered by four 6L6s
RRP: £2280

MARSHALL
YJM100
Due in May, the Yngwie Malmsteen signature head shares the AFD model's attenuator control as well as boasting a half-power switch
RRP: £1515

through the self-biasing procedure every time you power up the AFD100. It's simple enough: just hold down the FX loop switch while switching on and let go once the LED flashes... then hang around for a bit, perhaps arranging your plectrums in order of thickness, until the amp rumbles into life. Allowing us to do our own bias adjustment may not seem like a wise move but it does facilitate easy power valve changes between anything from KT88s to EL34s to 6L6s. And if the chart's anything to go by, you can keep the trimpot set around 36mA and it'll be safe for all of them. Amp techs are cordially invited to write in and tell us whether this is a great idea or sheer madness.

Once the amp is ready to join us, in the default AFD mode with attenuator fully bypassed and a suitably formidable Marshall 4x12" cab plugged in, the slavering hounds of rock hell are quickly off the leash. There's a fair old noise floor with everything just past noon – Slash's favourite setting, apparently – but the main reason for that is that an overdriven all-tube 100W Marshall through a 4x12" is very, very loud. In this case it's also surprisingly harsh and spiky – even with humbuckers you'll be leaping for the Presence control and jamming it to zero.

Not only is this 100W Marshall very loud, it's also harsh and spiky. It'll certainly cut through a mix, but it'll also cut through masonry

It's a strident lead tone that will certainly cut through a mix, but it'll also cut through masonry. Both preamp and output levels are happier the higher they go, and if you do manage to get those hounds back on the leash for a few seconds, you'll find your rewards in the area where sustain turns into musical feedback.

Switching to #34 mode, the tone thins out and gets even more vicious. The interactive controls offer ample scope for mid-scooping but there's only so much you can do with EQ, and single notes in the middle register are accompanied by a slight scratchy rumble. Subtlety, by the way, is not an option. In AFD mode we're promised 'biting bright cleans' as well as the heavy stuff, but you'll find cleaner than this in a dung beetle's laundry basket.

Now then, the attenuation thing. Starting at minimum, we still have a definite rock voice but the snarly edge has been replaced by a soft fuzziness, maybe too soft, and that Presence knob will soon be on its way back up again to replace some top-end bite. Now turn the output level up a notch or two and Presence will need to come down again accordingly – it's quite a balancing act. The AFD is never entirely convincing as a 1W or 12W amp, but it's not bad, and this is undeniably a useful feature in the age of the home-recorded hit.

Big surprise: user-biasing is a clever but extremely time-consuming feature of the Marshall Slash head

VERDICT

Setting aside the mythology and the years of internet hype, this doesn't feel like the holy grail of rock tone. There's plenty of scope for screeching high-gain heroics, and to be fair, until the original Appetite amp turns up there's no way of telling how well Marshall has nailed the job in hand. But it's safe to say they aimed to make it sound fairly nasty, and it may be that they succeeded a little too well.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	17/20
Playability	14/20
Sound	13/20
Value for money	13/20
Vibe	16/20
TOTAL	**73%**

Good for... being the loudest lead guitarist in your entire county

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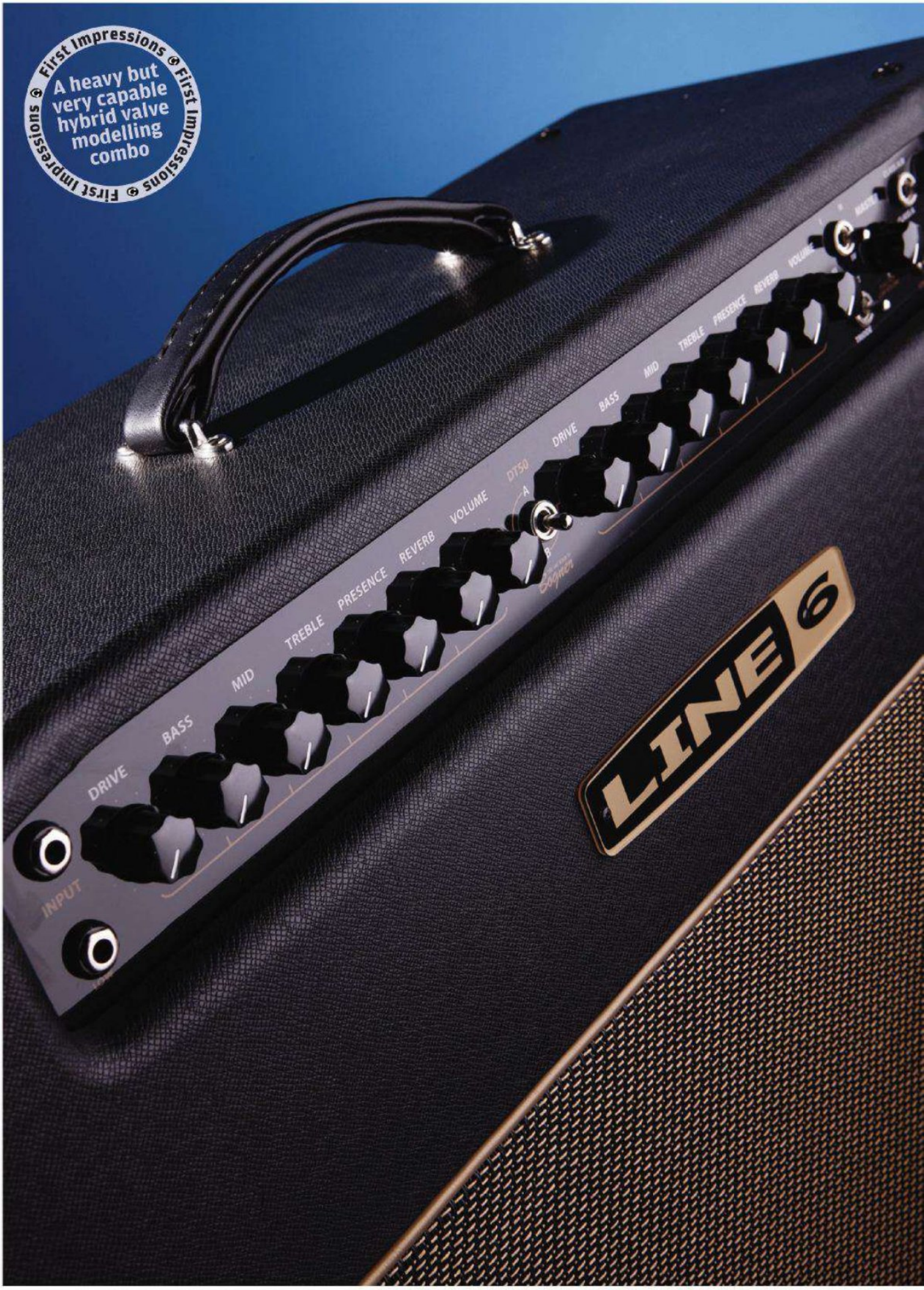
First Impressions
A heavy but very capable hybrid valve modelling combo
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TREBLE
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VOLUME
DT50
A
B
INPUT
LINE 6

Price: £1349

This Line 6 is much more than a digital modelling amp: the DT50 is a Bogner-designed valve 25W/50W combo with volume-dependent modelling. Review by Huw Price

Line 6

DT50 212 Combo

Why has Line 6 produced, of all things, a valve amp? Well, the carefully-controlled digital domain of modelling amps has always been subject to the vagaries of the analogue world. Pods and so forth can be plugged directly into high-fidelity monitoring systems, but digital amps usually involve unforgiving solid state amplification stages and lo-fi guitar speakers... so even if the models are superb, you won't be able to hear them properly. Also, good valve amps are more affordable than ever. It's ironic - lots of players enjoy the models so much that once they're ready to upgrade, they'll often buy the 'real thing'.

In response, Line 6 has teamed up with amp builder Reinhold Bogner to create a valve amp, the DT50. It looks complex, but the controls are quite simple to navigate. Essentially this is a two-channel amp with two identical sets of controls - Drive, Bass, Mid, Treble, Presence, Reverb and Volume, then a shared Master Volume. On top of that, Reinhold's valve know-how has met with Line 6's modelling ethic to provide a huge range of entirely analogue switching options. Best of all, the DT50 stores your previous settings for both channels, so you can switch back and forth without losing a thing.

The two EL34 power valves can switch from Class A, for greater dynamics and touch sensitivity, to Class AB for more headroom and power. Although they're pentodes, a second switch puts the EL34s into triode mode for a rounder and more 'vintage' sound that's also quieter. This switch determines the overall wattage. In Class A it's cathode-biased at 25W, and Class AB delivers 50W of fixed bias power.

The Voicing switch is key to the DT50's versatility. It has four settings and it sets the flavour of the preamp and tone stack of the currently selected channel. It also alters the negative feedback (NFL) loop topology, which influences the tone and dynamic feel of the amp.

Setting 1 is the 'tightest'; Line 6 advises setting the DT50 to Class AB pentode for a 1960s blackface-style sound. Class AB pentode mode is also suggested for setting 2, designed for a slightly looser 'classic British' sound. Position 3 gives zero negative feedback and a 'distinct chimey' quality... almost certainly code for Vox. For setting 4 it's back to Class AB pentode for high gain tones using NFL coupled with added low frequency resonance.

A pair of 12AX7s take care of the preamp; output comes from EL34s, and there's a 50W/25W power option

Mixing speakers is a hip thing, and the DT50 212 contains one Celestion G12H90 and one Celestion Vintage 30

Reinhold Bogner's valve know-how has met with Line 6's modelling ethic to provide a huge range of entirely analogue switching options

FACTFILE

DT50 212

Specs: 25/50W 2x12" valve/modelling hybrid combo with 2 x ECC83 and 2 x EL34 valves, effects loop. Made in China

Controls: Drive, Bass, Mid, Treble, Presence, Volume, Reverb (all x 2), Channel, triode/pentode, Class AB/Class A, Voicing switches

Price: DT50 112 1x12" combo, £1199; DT50 212 2x12" combo, £1349; DT50 stereo head, £999; 4x12" cabinet, £569

Contact:
Line 6
01327 302 714
www.line6.com

There's no 'clean' and 'dirty' channel on the Line 6 DT50 – Ch1 and Ch2 are identical, with the same controls

THE COMPETITION

MARSHALL
JMD102

The British-designed option: a combo with 2x12" Celestion speakers, four EL34 valves in the power stage, a digital preamp with 16 preamp models, four channels, 28 presets via provided footpedal or 128 presets via optional MIDI pedal. Four modulation effects, four delays, digital reverb, noise gate, programmable serial/parallel FX loop, Silent Recording Mode, MIDI in/thru, emulated XLR line out, 16 and 8 Ohm speaker outputs

RRP: £816

PEAVEY
VYPYR TUBE 120

Peavey's own valve-powered modeller offers 120W via two 6L6s through 2x12" speakers, 12 amp models each with two channels, a three-band EQ, 11 editable effects, 11 editable stompbox effects, a looper, chromatic tuner, 12 programmable presets via the optional Sanpera II Pedal 400, a USB interface, MIDI in/out, Tap Tempo, a headphone out and an MP3/CD/Aux input

RRP: £546

The rear panel has an FX loop with a return Level control and a cab-simulated, transformer-tapped DI out. Any regular on/off footswitch with a TS jack can be connected for channel switching. MIDI in and out sockets integrates the DT50 into any existing MIDI rig and there are three speaker outputs rated at 4Ohm, 8Ohm and 16Ohm. You can use one or two cabs.

Being a Line 6, there is some modelling technology, but here's the clever bit – it's volume level dependent. At low volume, non-amp-specific power stage modelling provides a cranked feel, then the analogue circuitry takes over as you raise output levels.

Pod HD (300/400/500) multi-FX processors connect via an L6 Link socket. An XLR connector passes audio and digital control data, so changing settings on one immediately updates the other, plus you can save DT50 settings onto the Pod for later recall. Best of all, the DT50's analogue configuration automatically reconfigures to optimise settings for any amp model selected on the Pod. For example, a Voxy model on the Pod will switch the DT50 to Class A and a Rectified model will trigger Class AB. With the Link Thru socket you can daisy chain up to four DT amps and activate wet/dry modes for individual amps. So you can send separate dry audio from effects.

SOUNDS

The DT50 can certainly deliver loud cleans with impressive clarity and warmth. Don't expect modeller-style instant results, but after a while you'll figure out how to dial in tones that resemble certain iconic amps.

The reverb sounds very spring-like; it doesn't integrate with the dry tone quite as seamlessly as some genuine spring reverbs, but twang, country and funk are all on the menu along with Voxy chime and Hendrixy cleans. The Gain and Volume controls interact smoothly to dial in anything from a hint of overdrive to serious distortion. Voicings 1 and 3 have the lowest gain, but voicing 3 provides the warmest and woodiest tones once you calm things down a bit.

Line 6 has always paid close attention to sounds, but Bogner has provided a dynamic feel that moves things to a higher level

Voicing 4 – full-on Californian crunch – is a real blast, with super-long sustain and pinched harmonics just about anywhere. Brutal metallic distortion and deep dark drones can also be dialed up, but composure and clarity aren't compromised for crunch. Your guitar will still retain plenty of individual character, the bass remains tight and you can still feel a valvey dynamic response.

By cranking up the master you eventually hit a sweet spot. All valve amps are like this, and the DT50 is no exception. The transition from modelled to analogue tones is very smooth and you can enjoy the full might of 50W or triode down to 25W, where you can relish the full analogue experience at sensible and useable volume levels.

VERDICT

This is a high quality valve guitar combo with an almost infinite variety of great tones, even without a Pod HD in tow. If, however, you do splash out on that Line 6 floor unit (see our Feb issue for a full review) then you'll be able to amplify all your presets through top-notch valve circuitry, then go all-analogue and 'booteeky' when the situation demands it.

Aside from its massive weight, the DT50's drawback is that channel switching is accompanied by a slight delay and drop in volume while the circuitry settles back down. This only lasts for about a second, so perhaps it's not that much of an inconvenience. Line 6 has always paid close attention to sounds, but Reinhold Bogner has provided the dynamic feel that was required to move the whole thing to a higher level. Could this be a new direction for Line 6 and digital thermionics in general? Only time will tell.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	18/20
Versatility	20/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	17/20
Vibe	18/20
TOTAL	**91%**

Good for... everything at any volume level
Look elsewhere... onboard effects and tuner

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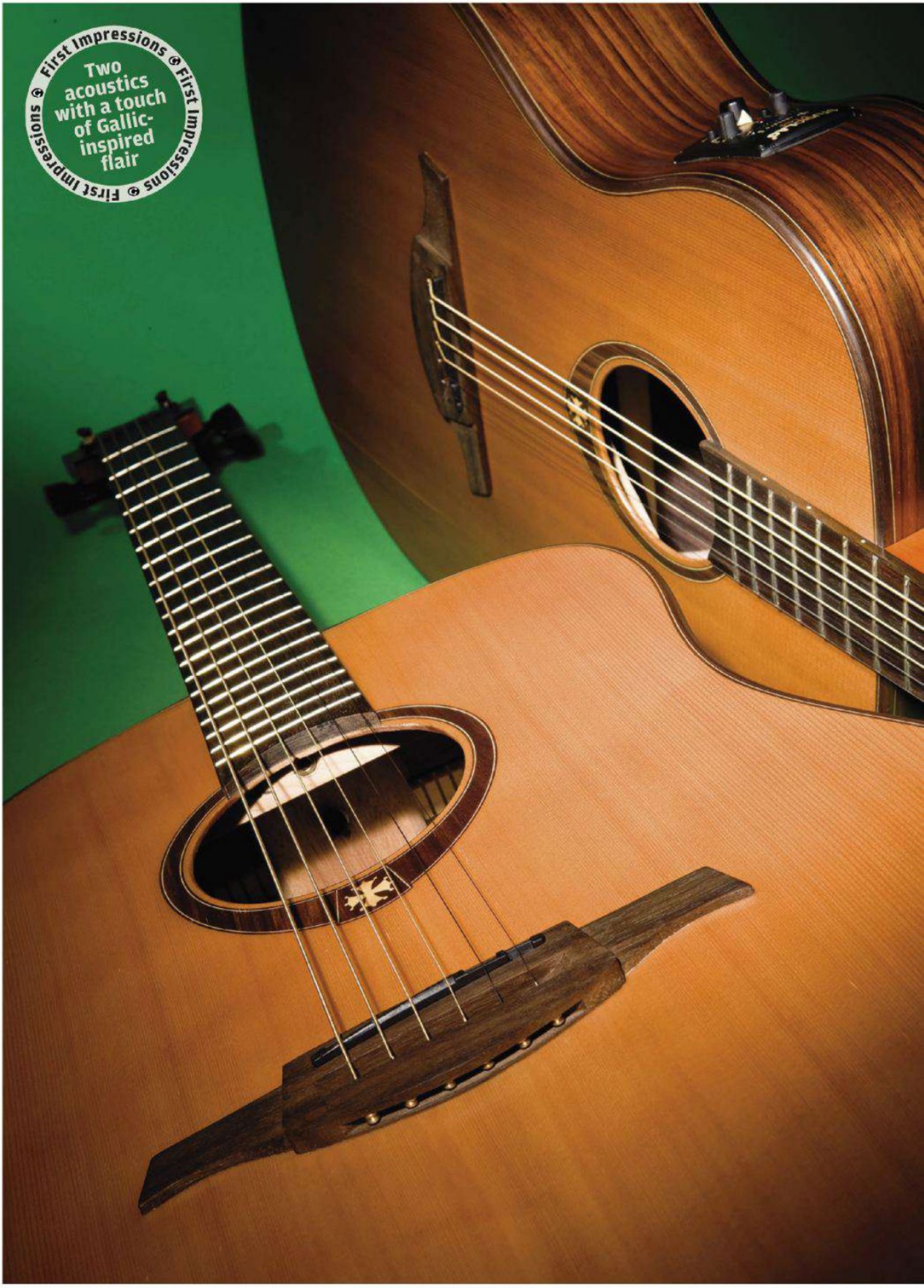

First Impressions
Two acoustics with a touch of Gallic-inspired flair

Price: £454

Classic shapes with a distinctive style: electric specialist Lag also makes a wide range of acoustics and electros, and now they're branching out even further. Review by Jerry Uwins

Lag

Tramontane T300D & T300AE Acoustics

French maker Lag's first Tramontanes (named after a wind that blows across southern France) were introduced in 2008, but now they've been superseded by a brand new, much more extensive budget-to-mid-price acoustic line-up. They're all made in China and split into five series covering dreadnoughts, auditoriums and jumbos. The new instruments share distinctive styling courtesy of teardrop, cross-motifed soundhole rosettes, and a headstock design borrowed from Lag's Imperator solidbody electric. Our test models both have solid cedar tops and laminated rosewood backs and sides.

The T300D's neck is the epitome of easy-playing slimness. Tuners have black metal keystone-shape buttons

Look, no pins: the Lag Tramontanes use a string-through bridge with a compensated graphite saddle

T300D

As on all the new Tramontanes, it's the rosette on this square-shouldered dreadnought that first catches the eye. Attractively reminiscent of art nouveau, it's inlaid in rosewood to match the back and sides, with the edging and cross picked out in contrasting maple. A similar coachlined combination of woods is used for the back centre strip and body binding, and the latter has been radiused off to give a rounded, flowing feel. The guitar's super-smooth lacquering is officially described as satin, but in reality it's nearer to being a low gloss.

Like all Tramontanes the T300D comes thoughtfully fitted with a second strap button at the heel. The bolt-on, full-scale mahogany neck is fashioned to a modern, shallow, very slick C-meets-D profile, and we've got the added vintage touch of a volute under the nut position. The neck width is regular, and a near-55mm string spacing at the bridge means that fingerstyle is catered for. The pared-back, flat heel offers as good up-top access as you're going to get on a non-cutaway acoustic, while the rosewood-overlaid peghead carries black tuners which coordinate with the same-colour graphite nut and saddle. The only aspects which

With a well-balanced blend of warm lows and a sunny top end, the T300D is a guitar which can tackle an array of playing styles

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	18/20
Playability	16/20
Sound	17/20
Value for money	17/20
Vibe	15/20
TOTAL	83%

Good for... sturdy dreadnought performance; distinctive trim

Look elsewhere... smoother fret ends, lower action

FACTFILE

T300D

Description: Dreadnought acoustic. Made in China

Price: £454

Build: Solid red cedar top, laminated rosewood back and sides. Mahogany neck, 20-fret bound rosewood fingerboard. Rosewood bridge, graphite nut and saddle, black diecast tuners, two strap buttons

Options: T300DCE cutaway electro (£601) with StudioLag Plus system

Left-handers: TL300D (£454) and TL300DCE (£601)

Finish: Satin natural

Scale length: 649mm/25.5"

Neck width:
Nut 43mm
12th fret 54mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 20mm
Ninth fret 22mm

String spacing:
Nut 36mm
Bridge 54mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.3mm
12th fret bass 2.8mm

Max rim depth: 119mm

Max body width: 397mm

Fingerboard radius: 16"

Weight: 2.07kg/4.55lb

THE COMPETITION

GREAT DIVIDE
SBDC-17-G

Glossy solid cedar/sapele dread with rosewood bindings and wood-inlaid rosette

RRP: £389

TANGLEWOOD
TW40D-AN

Sundance Historic debut in solid spruce/mahogany; amber-tint top, one-piece fingerstyle neck

RRP: £469

SIMON & PATRICK
SP6 CED

Semi-gloss solid cedar/wild cherry with semi-wide neck and marquetry-style wood rosette

RRP: £528

Price: £601

FACTFILE

T300AE

Description: Non-cutaway auditorium electro-acoustic. Made in China

Price: £601

Build: As T300D, plus Shadow Nanoflex undersaddle pickup; StudioLag Plus preamp with Volume, Sound Presets (1-5), Bass/Treble, Preset Bypass, auto-chromatic tuner, low battery LED, integral battery holder (two 3V lithium)

Options: Other 300-Series auditoriums are nylon-strung: TN300A acoustic (£454), TN300A14CE cutaway electro (£601) and slimline TN300A14SCE (£601), both with StudioLag Plus systems

Left-handers: No

Finish: Satin natural

Scale length: 649mm/25.5"

Neck width:
Nut 43mm
12th fret 54mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 20mm
Ninth fret 22mm

String spacing:
Nut 36mm
Bridge 54mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 2.4mm
12th fret bass 2.9mm

Max rim depth: 110mm

Max body width: 394mm

Fingerboard radius: 16"

Weight: 2.05kg/4.5lb

Contact:
Barnes & Mullins
01691 652449
www.barnesandmullins.co.uk

THE COMPETITION

TAKAMINE
EG5013SVFT

Solid spruce/maple OM-style in antique sunburst. Three-band tuner-loaded TK40 system with notching and mid contour

RRP: £521

BREEDLOVE
OM/CMe H-H

Solid cedar/mahogany orchestra has herringbone top purfling and rosette. Two-band VTC preamp includes tuner

RRP: £620

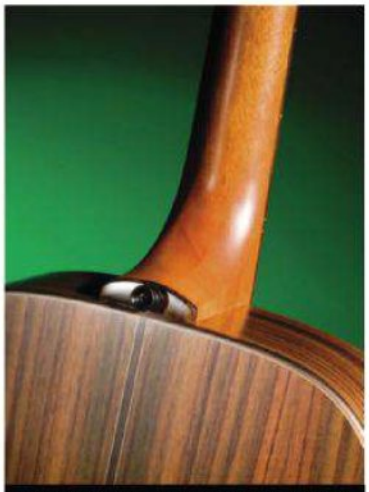
SIMON & PATRICK
SP6 FOLK A3

Solid cedar/wild cherry, with wood-inlaid rosette and semi-wide neck. B-Band A3.2 system offers four-band EQ

RRP: £691

NOTE: The above are all non-cutaway

The preamp is a special design from Shadow, and the undersaddle Nanoflex pickup is by Shadow too



Laminated rosewood back and sides, the same as the T300D. The strap button in the heel is very welcome

The T300AE has a warmer tonal temperament than the dreadnought, with a sweeter, darker timbre. It's an adept electro-acoustic, too

are less than glowing - applicable to our T300AE too - are somewhat sharp fret ends and a fairly high action, but both would be easily sorted by a rigorous set-up. The rear-strung bridge, incidentally, has a channel routed out behind the saddle, enabling a decent string break angle regardless of action height.

SOUNDS

This is a satisfyingly punchy fella. The underlying timbre is more mid-scooped than some dreadnoughts but the sound has plenty of throw and body, along with responsive dynamics. Tonally, it's a well-balanced blend of warm lows and a quite sunny top end. It's a guitar which can tackle a variety of playing styles.

T300AE

Among the various auditoriums in the new line-up, the T300AE is notable for being the only electro-acoustic without a cutaway. As most electro auditoriums on the market have cutaways, extra points to Lag for giving us the choice.

All Tramontane electros carry preamp systems designed exclusively for Lag by Shadow, and the one here is a StudioLag Plus, accompanied by the same company's Nanoflex undersaddle pickup. Unusually among analogue systems, the preamp offers five sound (or tone) presets - described as Natural Folk, Bluesy, Studio Rhythm, Fingerstyle, Jazz - supported by a combined Bass/Treble control and a switch that bypasses the presets for a neutral voicing. The centre-detented tone knob is operable whether the presets are bypassed or not.

Also included is a system-muting auto-chromatic tuner that works efficiently, even if the dinky linear array of LEDs isn't that easy to read. The only handling drawback on the control panel is a slippery, rather stiff preset rotary; shame it's not rubberised or has serrated edges for a surer grip. The power source is housed under a slide-off cover, and instead of the usual PP3 battery we find two 3V lithium cells.

As for the guitar, it's a re-run of the dread in folk form: same trim, hardware, neck profile and finish. Mind you, the top has more cross-silking, so perhaps the cedar is of a higher grade.

SOUNDS

With acoustic volume well up to snuff for a 000, the T300AE has a warmer tonal temperament than the dreadnought, with a sweeter, slightly darker timbre with a lyrical, long-sustaining quality that suits the style of instrument very well indeed. It's an adept electro-acoustic, too. The bypassed sound is likeably natural: Natural Folk is a slightly harder-edged; Bluesy is darker, more low-mid-forward; the gently-toned Studio Rhythm drops the gain a bit for general strummage; Fingerstyle adds a smidge of high-end sparkle for picking clarity; Jazz is the mellow mood, delivering what it says on the tin. Permutate all these selections with a sympathetic range of tonal adjustment, and the palette of sounds is impressively versatile and of convincingly good quality. High marks too for a spot-on pickup balance across the strings.

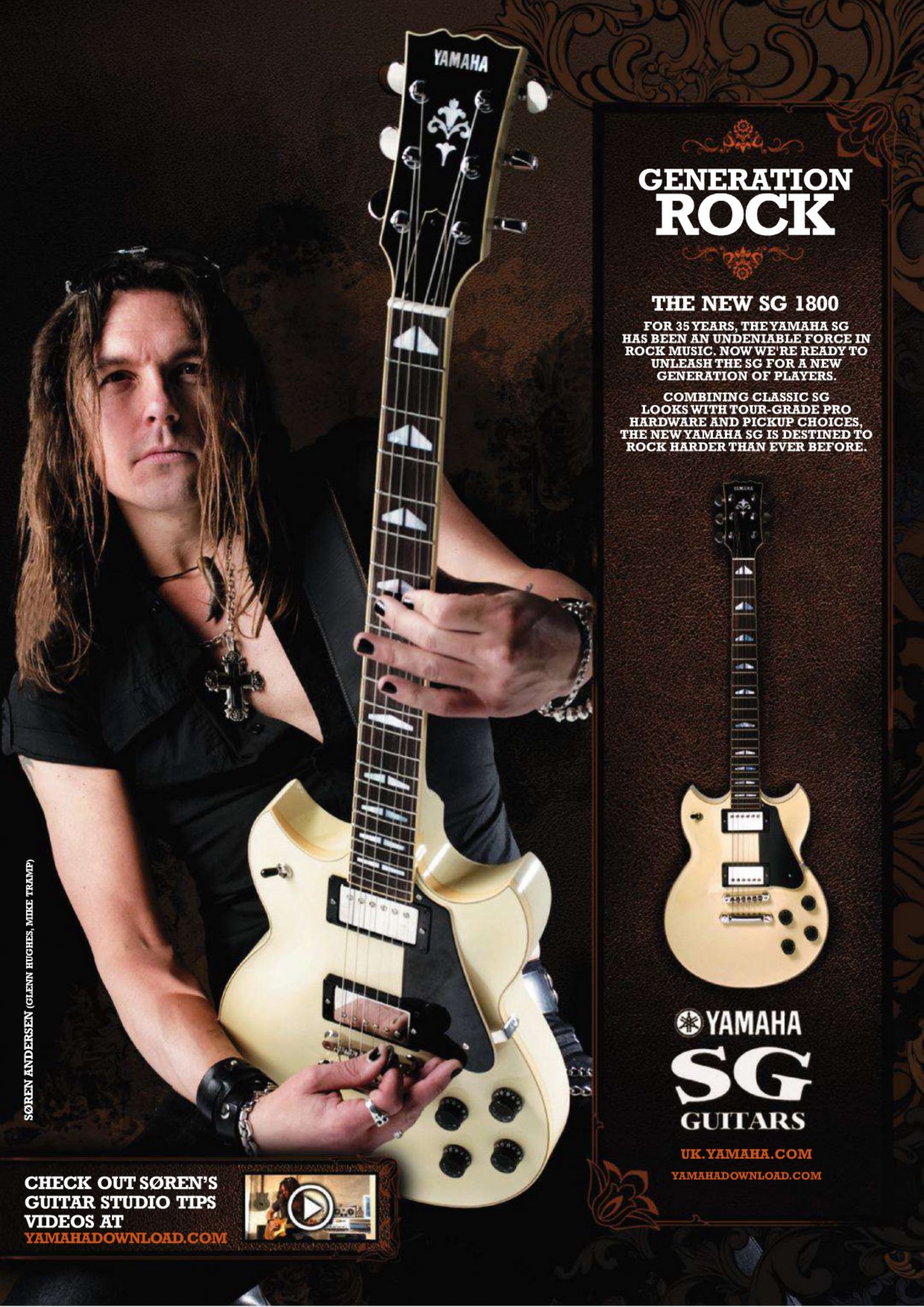
VERDICT

Our samples' action set-up and fret dressing could be better, but these Tramontanes are still highly appealing instruments. Their well-executed cosmetic approach is stylish, instantly recognisable and just that bit different, and both certainly deliver the goods soundwise. To say that these two guitars possess a certain je ne sais quoi is entirely appropriate - and complimentary.

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	18/20
Playability	16/20
Sound	18/20
Value for money	17/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**86%**

Good for... cosmetic taste; versatile, high-quality preamp system

Look elsewhere... as T300D



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First Impressions

Dark side of the boom: an all-black P-bass with extra power

Price: £766

Roger Waters has toted his black Precision from tiny psychedelic club gigs to the world's biggest stages. Will Fender meddle with a winning formula? Review by Gareth Morgan

Fender

Fender Roger Waters Precision Bass

Fender's Artist Series has an impressive roster of endorsees including Sting, Duff McKagan and Marcus Miller, to name but a few. The latest addition to this roll-call is further indication of Fender's willingness to choose players who aren't necessarily only known for their chops. Awarding this particular signature bass accolade is a shrewd move on Fender's behalf; Waters is mid-way through world-touring his *Wall* set, a stadium-hopping jaunt that may well be the 66-year old ex-Pink Floyd supremo's last of serious magnitude... yet it's also a slightly strange choice. After all, Waters seldom discusses the gear he uses on stage or in the studio, and has even been quoted as saying 'I would play bass because I sometimes want to hear the sound I make when I hit a string... but I've never been interested in playing the bass.'

Fender describes this Mexican-made Precision as being 'as tastefully tailored as Waters' own simple-yet-sophisticated bass work.' Translation: black. The alder body is a sea of black, reinforced by a single-ply black scratchplate that's virtually invisible when looking straight at it or under stage lights - dead cool, though. Adding black hardware is an unusual move; though the knobs are of the basic knurled variety and the bridge is the standard four-saddle unit, altogether they contribute to creating the perception that this is a very serious instrument and one that the bassist of any self-respecting Floyd tribute band would be delighted to sling around

Chrome elephant-ear machineheads take care of business. The only sign of Waters is a subtle signature

The backwards 'F' logo on the black plastic-backed neckplate harks back to post-CBS Precision basses

Fender describes this Mexican-made Precision as being as 'tastefully tailored as Waters' simple, sophisticated bass work.' Translation: black

their neck. Elsewhere, all build details are present and correct from the even rear bouts to forearm and ribcage chamfers to the offset horns. The P-bass really is a piece of near-perfect design.

Certain features are based on details from a selection of decades. The maple neck has a 'thick C-shaped contour' which puts it somewhere in the '70s, although in practice 'thick' means that it's only a millimetre greater in depth than you'd expect. The headstock is adorned with a '50s spaghetti logo decal... less fussy and intrusive than it was to become. The neck is bolt-on and the neck plate is cushioned by a rubber spacer (Fender literature describes this as being 'gasketed', which sounds rather painful) and, in recourse to mid-'60s detailing (and, presumably, to fill in the missing decade), Fender have retro-stamped the plate with a flowing 'F'. Nice. Other details of note include

FACTFILE

ROGER WATERS

Description: Solidbody bass. Made in Mexico

Price: £766

Build: Alder body, C-shaped gloss urethane-finish maple neck with 20 jumbo nickel frets on a maple fingerboard. Standard four-saddle bridge and Vintage '70s Fender-stamped open gear tuners. Black and chrome hardware

Electrics: Passive ,with one Seymour Duncan Basslines SPB-3 Quarter Pound Split-Coil Precision Bass pickup, One Volume and one Tone

Left-hander: No

Finishes: Black only

Range Options: None

Scale length: 864mm/34"

Width of neck:
Nut 45mm
12th fret 58mm

Depth of neck:
First fret 21mm
12th fret 24mm

String spacing:
Nut 12mm
Bridge 19.5mm

Action as supplied:
12th fret treble 1.5mm
12th fret bass 2.5mm

Weight: 3.85kg/8.5lbs

Contact: Fender GB&I
01342 331 700
www.fender.com

THE COMPETITION

FENDER
American Standard Precision Bass

The basic US-made Precision, so you can relax and get on with playing. Nice neck feel on these latest models, too

RRP: £975

BASS COLLECTION
Power Bass

An excellent budget rendition of the classic split-pickup bass. Affordable, and it looks and sounds the business

RRP: £295

SQUIER
Vintage Modified Precision Bass

Excellent playability, good sounds and a competitive asking price from the rightfully popular VM line

RRP: £327

a vintage-style slotted truss rod nut with access at the bottom of the neck, Waters' preference of maple fingerboard (with 20 medium jumbo nickel frets), a brass nut (a detail not seen on Fender basses or guitars since the early '80s), and four Vintage '70s Fender stamped open gear tuners. The tuners' chrome contrasts to all the black at the body and gives the bass a yin/yang aspect in the hardware department. It all works rather well.

The pickup is a split-coil Seymour Duncan Basslines SPB-3 Quarter Pound, a unit known as being both versatile, fairly high output and good for blues and classic rock, with a fat, full, punchy tone. In playability terms the weight is reasonable and the balance as good as you'd expect; the only possible negative is wide string spacing. We're only talking an extra millimetre, but this can make a huge difference to how comfortable or familiar a bass feels to play.

SOUNDS

So does the Roger Waters Precision enable us mere mortals to sound like the man whose signature is scrawled on the back of the headstock? The conundrum with any Signature Series P-bass which has unmodified controls and comes with generically similar pickups - even where they're superior to Fender's own units - is whether getting the sound justifies the instrument, where any other similarly-spec'd bass is going to do the same job (and more than likely come in cheaper).

Extra-fat polepieces are the giveaway that this is one of Seymour Duncan's high-powered Quarter Pound pickups

The hardware might be black but this is a regular vintage-style Precision bridge with grooved barrel saddles

If you can deal with the thicker neck and the slightly wide string spacing and you love Precisions, then you'll like this bass

Plugging in is a rewarding experience. Roll the tone control to full just like Waters does most of the time and you'll instantly get a fat, snarling tone with a pleasing crunch. Where certain old Precisions have a slightly hollow feel in the midrange, here it's as solid as a rock with plenty of weighty impact and a surfeit of low mids. The highs are fairly bright and zingy - probably a combination resulting from the Seymour Duncan pickup and the brass nut. The ultra-low action means that if you're aggressive at the D and G strings the tone does take on the clanky element you associate with using a pick and with much of Waters' work, but your notes do tend to choke a little.

When a less edgy sound is required, you'll need to back off the tone control. This provides two or three audibly different shades of smooth with lows that have more thud and a less forward midrange. Thinner strings gain more body, making them a more practical proposition in general background playing terms... fairly standard stuff with any Precision, as is the woolly sub-bass rumble when Tone is on full cut.

VERDICT

If you can deal with the thicker neck and slightly wider string spacing and you love Precisions, then you'll like this bass. The brooding black finish sets it apart, and the Seymour Duncan delivers a tone that's got a little more harmonic life than P-bass aficionados might expect. With or without pick in hand, it's easy to get sounds that hark back to the sort of playing Waters delivered with Floyd and continues to deliver as a solo artist. And with a sensible price (given the thought that's gone into its production) it has definitely got to be on the 'check it out' list.

FINAL SCORE	
Build Quality	19/20
Playability	16/20
Sound	16/20
Value for money	17/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**85%**

Good for... Fans of Waters or Pink Floyd or anyone interested in a quality Precision

Look elsewhere... For a thinner-necked P-Bass or something completely different

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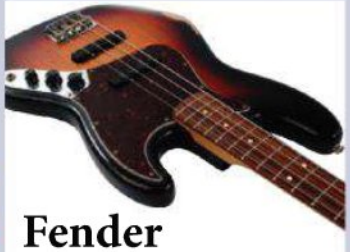

Fender
Road Worn 60's J-Bass **£893**

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Mark Knopfler STRAT **£1750**

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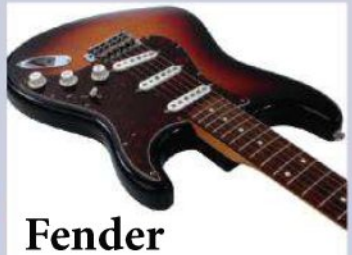

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John Mayer STRAT **£1440**

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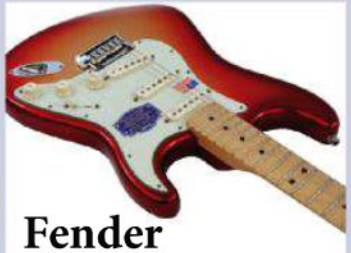
American DLX STRAT HSS **£1167**



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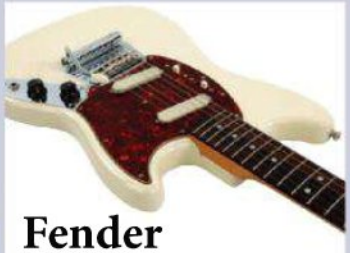
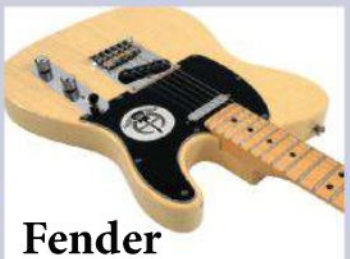
American DLX STRAT MN **£1148**



Fender
65 Mustang Olympic White **£702**

Fender
American Std. Tele **£1030**



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Price: £228

More sounds, effects, flexibility and control for the money than any other unit around: that's Digitech's claim for its very latest bass multi-FX. Review by Gareth Morgan

First Impressions: Simple controls but a blizzard of information

DigiTech

BP355 Bass Multi-Effects Processor

Over the last 10 years the selection of sound-shaping devices available for bassists has mushroomed, and here at *Guitar & Bass* we've been fortunate enough to investigate a fair selection of them in depth. The latest to land in our lap is the compact BP355 multi-effects gizmo from DigiTech.

Multi-FX units are favoured by some players as they provide a variety of effects in one box that can be combined, saved and dialled up as and when desired with a minimum of fuss. That's the case with the BP355, except it also offers simulated ('modelled') amps and cabinets, plus a digital tuner. There's also a drum machine with a mass of practical pre-programmed patterns, so the BP355 can be used as a basic practising tool. A USB port and Cubase software are provided for PC/Mac interface for sound editing or recording.

The unit is of rugged metal construction and stands 445mm wide, 222mm deep and 64mm high, with the main controls numbering three plastic footswitches (Value Up and Down, Amp A/B), six control knobs (Tone Library, FX Library, FX Level, Amp Gain, Amp Level and Master Volume) and an expression pedal. Connectivity is fairly extensive, featuring stereo outs of both the jack and balanced XLR variety and, as well as the obligatory headphone mini-jack, an Aux in of similar nature means you can feed MP3s or CD into the BP355, blending via the Master Level control.

SOUNDS

The BP355 offers 20 modelled amps including Ampeg, Fender, Sunn, Trace Elliot and Mesa Boogie, and 13 cabinets such as an Acoustic 360, Eden 4x10, Ampeg 8x10 and SWR Basic Black. These, together with a ton of effects (including chorus, distortion, vibrato and envelope filter), can be accessed individually or via Tone and Effects Libraries. You can also sample and multi-track up to 20 seconds of music using the Looper feature.

There are two modes accessed via the footswitches, Stomp and Preset: the former is suited to making a sound on the spot while Preset is useful for accessing one of the 70 pre-programmed patches, which can also then be edited and stored at the touch of a button. In terms of what's already in the can, we feel that too many of the presets are based on some form of distortion; of course, it's all very editable, but these tend to colour the direction you take while at the same time being largely uninspiring. There's lots of other decent effects on offer and, as always, the ability to blend degrees of any of the effects with your clean signal is really useful. While you can't alter parameters other than gain with the amp and cab models, editing the FX is straightforward and the Store button makes saving the result of your labours a simple affair.

In some ways, the most useful elements are the drum machine and ability to plug in an MP3/CD player for practising, with or without headphones, utilising all the features for some serious inspiration when there's some hard work to be done.

A good selection of effects, the amp/cab models are useful, and PC/Mac compatibility means the BP355 has modern home recording in mind

VERDICT

We'll give the BP355 a guarded thumbs-up. There's a good selection of practical effects in here but, as with the majority of these types of unit, there's also a big handful of fairly useless offerings. The amp/cabinet models are good, and PC/Mac compatibility means the BP355 is set-up with the modern home recording scenario in mind. As a practice tool, it's excellent. It's also compact and seemingly well-built, and just under £230 it represents decent value for money.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	18/20
Useability	16/20
Sound	16/20
Value for money	17/20
Vibe	16/20
TOTAL	**83%**

Good for... A reasonably priced multi-effects or home practising and recording tool

Look elsewhere... For more all-round programmability but expect to pay a lot more

FACTFILE

BP355

Description: Multi-FX and amp/cabinet modeller. Made in China

RRP: £228

Specs: 20 amps, 13 cabs, Fretless/Wah, Comp, Dist, Chorus, Flanger, Phaser, Vibrato, Rotary, Vibrato, Tremolo, Envelope Filter, Auto Ya, Ya Ya, Synth, Step Filter, Whammy, Pitch Shift, Detuner, Harmoniser, Octaver, Delay, Reverb (10 at once), 20-second looper, drum machine. Cubase LE and DigiTech X-Edit software

Controls: Up, Down and Amp A/B footswitches, expression pedal, Tone Library, FX Library, FX Level, Amp Gain, Amp Level and Master Volume controls. Edit, Store and Drum Machine buttons, two Amp/Mixer buttons for Jack and XLR outputs

Connections: Input, Left and Right Output jacks, twin XLR Balanced Line Outputs, Aux In and Headphone mini jacks, USB Port

Dimensions: 445mm wide, 222mm deep, 64mm high

Weight: 2.8kg/6.2lbs

Range Options: BP50 £79, BP80 £99, BP200 £159

Contact: Sound Technology 01462 480000 www.soundtech.co.uk

THE COMPETITION

BOSS
ME-20B
Another down-sized multi-FX unit with 39 effects and tuner
RRP: £120

KORG
AX3000B
Loaded with 72 effects, cab models and 16 amp/OD models
RRP: £263.99

ZOOM
B2.1U
Jam-packed with 13 amps/stompboxes, 47 effects, tuner
RRP: £120

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Setting the bar even higher for generating scores and tablature

RRP: £52

Guitar Pro 6

Tablature Editor Software

Tablature and score-writing can be a daunting undertaking, so when Pro 5 was released in 2005 the job was made significantly easier – and, unsurprisingly, it became the go-to software. With Pro 6, it's now an absolute breeze.

FINAL SCORE

Functionality	19/20
Useability	20/20
Sound	18/20
Value for Money	18/20
Vibe	18/20
TOTAL	**93%**

Good for... Generating scores, tablature, expanding your knowledge

Look elsewhere... Unlikely to find better!

First, a completely new interface allows access to all the major features via a one-stop-screen. Six simple buttons divide the functions, and players can flick back and forth between tools with no fuss. The Editing function lets users construct and edit scores via keyboard, mouse or any MIDI instrument and intuitively multi-tasks by synchronising tablature and notation as you go. In 'Audio' you can take advantage of the upgraded Realistic Sound Engine – a vast improvement on its predecessor, with over 100 soundbanks offering a nice palette of amps and over 50 effects, plus very adequate mastering facilities.

There are some nifty tools too. The 'Capo' with the new 'partial capo' feature opens up a world of experimentation (especially when paired up with the tuning options), and the 'Speed Trainer' lets you adjust the tempo of a particularly testing section of your score, loop it and then speed it up in increments until you master it. There's a handy scale directory, a virtual fretboard/keyboard and a chord diagram generator that double up as virtual tutors, too. Genius.

VERDICT

Pro 6 is the ideal software for first timers, teachers, composers, bands, those employing session players... even those who feel the urge to look incredibly clever in front of their musical peers. Got Pro 5? Upgrade to 6 now, you won't regret it... especially Mac users!

Contact: 01706 285650
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Which all-round recording mic to buy? It's never easy – but here's a goodie

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Audio Technica

ATM450

With a frequency range extending from 40Hz to 209kHz, the ATM450 is billed as an all-rounder. First impressions? Well, putting the word 'Front' on the loud side of a mic is a sensible idea, because most small capsule condensers are designed to be pointed at the sound source. The permanently-charged electret capsule in the ATM450 is oriented to fire to the side. The pickup pattern is set to cardioid, which means it rejects sound from the rear, and there are onboard mini switches for 80Hz bass roll off and a 10dB attenuation pad.

FINAL SCORE

Build Quality	18/20
Versatility	18/20
Sound	17/20
Value for Money	17/20
Vibe	17/20
TOTAL	**87%**

Good for... general purpose instrument and voice recording

Look elsewhere... large capsule sonic flattery

All-rounder it may be, but the most obvious application for *G&B* readers would probably be as an acoustic guitar mic, so that's where we started our tests. The ATM450 stacked up very well against similarly-priced mics like the M Audio Pulsar II and Oktava MC012. There's a noticeable presence lift to the ATM450 that enhances detail without adding harshness. The bass end is also well focused, and tight and midrange colouration is largely absent. For electric guitar the ATM450 excels with clean sounds while retaining dynamics and detail with overdriven tones. It adds a brightness in the frequency range that works well for electrics, and high volume levels present no problems. It's an effective vocal microphone too, but you'll need to use the supplied wind sock, and it might not suit naturally sibilant voices.

VERDICT

If you're looking for a cost-effective general-purpose recording microphone that captures your sound rather than messing about with it, then the ATM450 is an accomplished performer in its price range.

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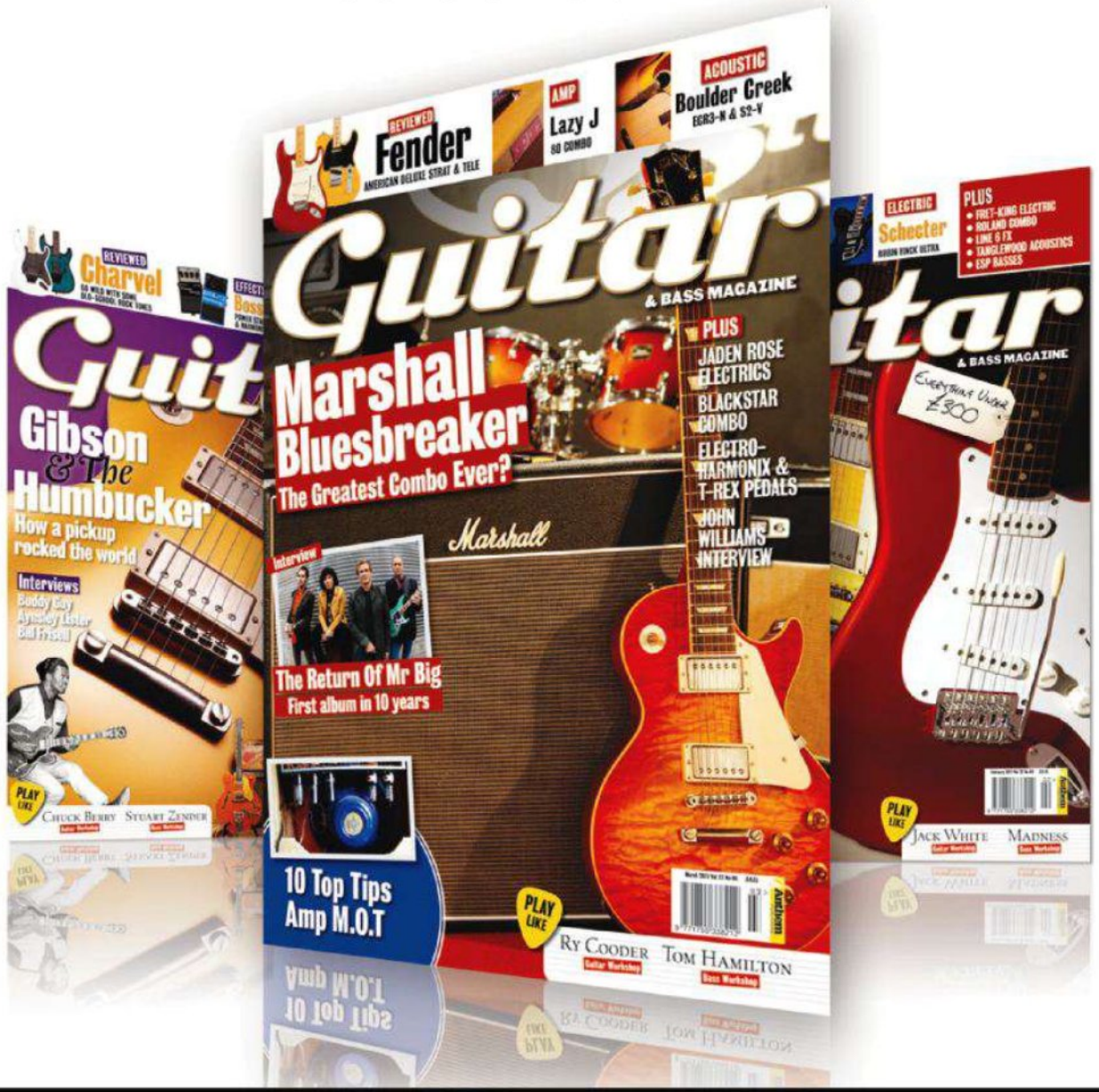
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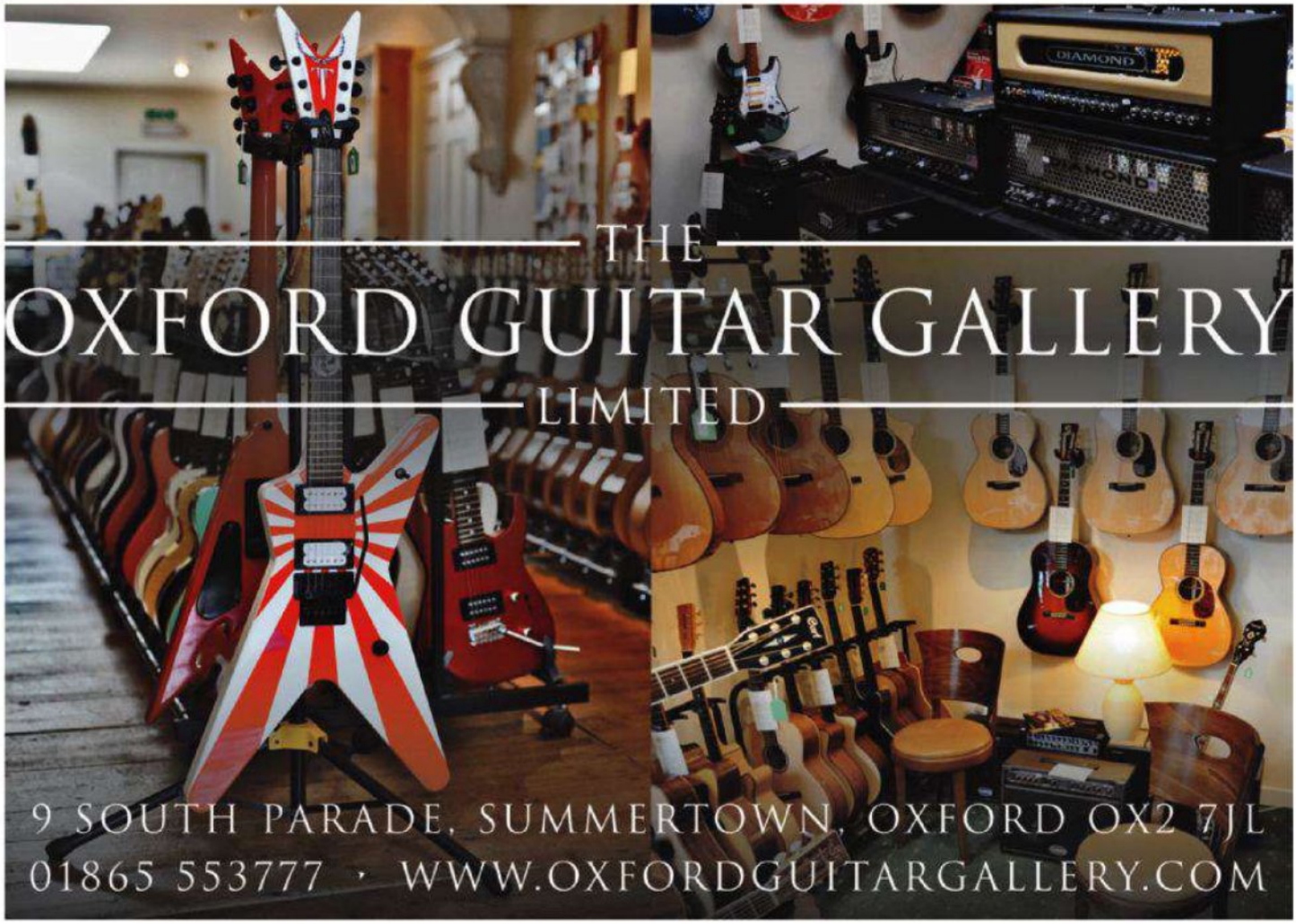


Eighteen Years To Life

Back in 1973 a young Phil Harris wore outrageous denim shirts and tottered around on stacked heels, everything focussed on his journey to rockdom. Here's the story of the year and the vintage gear that lit up the way...

I'll warn you now, valued readers, that this column is going to be an unashamed stroll down memory lane, stopping off at 1973. It was the year I turned 18, and after having left my pop band the previous year (despite the decent money and the increased chance of getting female attention, the music wasn't for me) I joined my first pro rock band, Oxo Witney. After answering an ad in *Melody Maker* I went down to the auditions at the Furniture Cave in Fulham. There were about 30 of us lead guitar players in the queue, including Cosmo Verrico, who went on to join the Heavy Metal Kids. The sight of Cosmo stopped me in my tracks... well, to be honest, it was the sight of the '59 Gibson Les Paul Standard he was warming up on that had me enraptured.

However, I managed to get the gig playing my ol' faithful - yes, I did think of it that way, even at that tender age - a '68 Goldtop. By that point it was down to the natural wood and had been fitted with a set of Grovers and Gibson humbuckers. The final modification came after seeing Mick Ronson on *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, where I realised that there were black bits on his cream humbucker surrounds and that he must have painted them. So I went down to a local shop and bought some paint you'd use on Airfix models and did the honours myself. In fact, every couple of months I would sit down outside after soundcheck and repaint the surrounds and then leave it a few hours to dry before the gig.

My other main guitar when I joined the band was a '63 SG Special... very Pete Townshend at *Live At Leeds*. However, when Oxo Witney went in to record some singles, I was told that I would need a Strat on a song (a lovely romantic ditty entitled *Shot In The Head*), so I swapped the SG for a '73 Strat that was the spit of Hendrix's Isle Of Wight Strat... save for the three-bolt neck and the bullet truss rod. I must admit to seriously abusing that guitar with some showmanship moves (you know, throwing it up in the air and then failing to catch it), so the tone control didn't work. Within six months it made Rory Gallagher's guitar seem like a showroom Strat.

As for backline, the previous guitar player in the band had left his Orange Matamp and two 4x12" cabs with the band for storage so I used that instead of my usual Hiwatt DR-103 head and Marshall basketweave 4x12" cabs. Back then I wasn't a big fan of Marshall amps because I thought it made me sound like everybody else. Also, by 1973 the Hendrix thing had died down a bit. Guitarists weren't allowed to space out as much, but were expected to work within a more structured, riff-based framework.

'The fella told us he'd seen us play at the club, that he loved Pete's Tele Custom, and would he want to swap it for his 1959 Les Paul Standard?'

The other staples of my sound were a Crybaby wah and a Watkins Copicat; the Copicat was always left in line, regardless of whether I needed echo, because it affected my sound like a preamp. If I turned it off my guitar sound was definitely weaker, and that wasn't what I was going for at all.

Plenty of other bits and pieces came my way during 1973. Some, like the Binson Echorec I discovered in a very run-down Brixton junk shop, were quickly sold on for monetary gain. Other purchases, such as the two AC30s I bought that year, weren't suitable for Oxo Witney but were used later on in my pro career, including my time in the Edgar Broughton Band.

However, there's one thing that got away from me that year that still bugs me to this day. Our rhythm guitarist Pete had been given a brand spanking new Tele Custom by his then-girlfriend, who also happened to be the granddaughter of the former Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. Now, during our first tour of Ireland in 1973 we'd played the Revolution Club in Dublin, and on a night off we went back to the club and there was a left-handed guitarist playing a '59 Les Paul Standard with a lovely sunburst flametop, upside down. After the gig we got chatting with the fella and he said he'd seen us play at the club and that he loved Pete's Tele Custom, and would he want to swap it for the Les Paul?

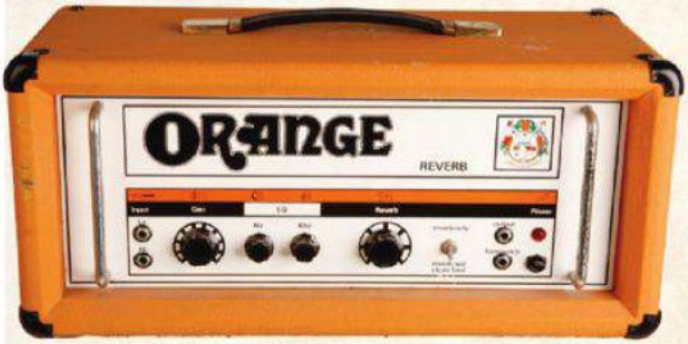
At that point I took Pete outside and told him to accept the offer. I could sell my own Les Paul, and out of the proceeds I'd buy him another Tele Custom (remember, they were new and easily available in the shops back then) and I'd give him £50 - which was a lot of money at the time - and I'd keep the Les Paul Standard.

However, Pete was an artist and a romantic, and he said no because he didn't want to have to lie to his girlfriend, even though she'd probably never realise the difference. I kept the guitar player's number, but Pete wouldn't relent. Pete went on to split up from his girlfriend and sell the Tele Custom in the '80s for £250. And the '59 Les Paul? Well, I've seen it over the years and it's now worth upwards of £180,000. Pete's still a good friend of mine, and every now and again we still torture ourselves over what might have been.

However, I've got some things made in 1973 that still remind me that, overall, it was a great year...

Hooked on Classics

1973 Orange Reverb

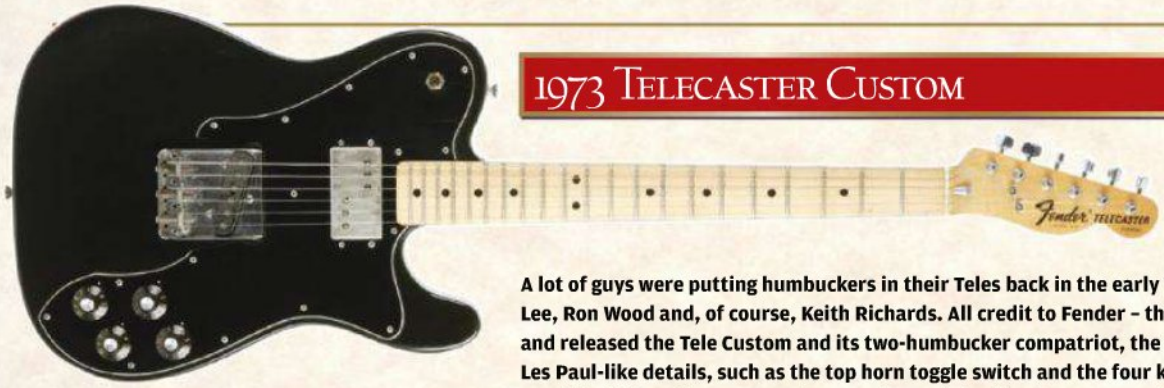


The first time I ever saw one of these Orange Reverb units was when I went to see Wishbone Ash at the Lyceum back in 1971. It looked like another amp, which was a good thing as in those days the general principle was the higher the stacks, the better you were. I got the chance to buy this one 20 years ago, it's just really, really good. One of the many things I love about it is the way in which you can use it with a clean signal. You can clean up everything in it and use the reverb separately to the clean sound. In simple terms, this means your guitar will sound as clean as a bell, but when you cut the notes you'll get this great reverb 'halo'. This would have cost around £80 in 1973, but now it's worth between £800 and £1000 due to its quality and rarity

1973 Colorsound Fuzz Phazer

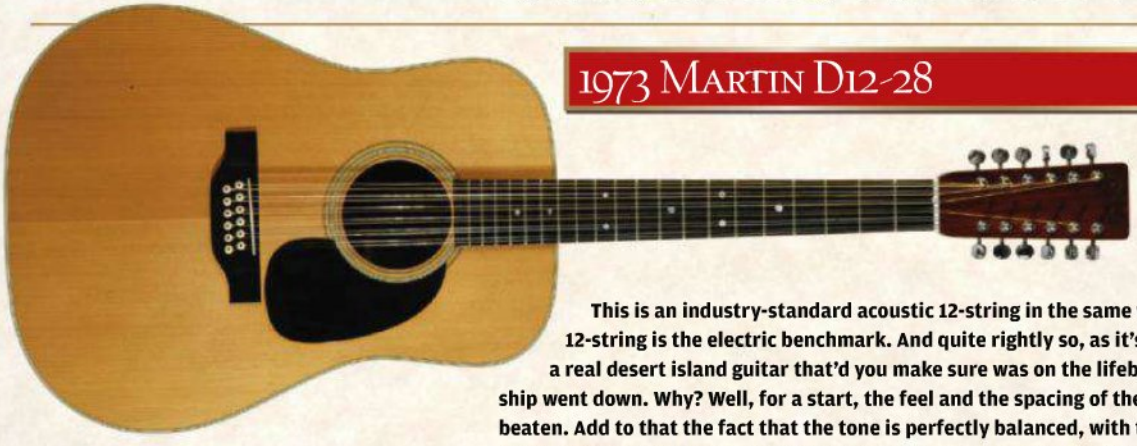
The great thing about Colorsounds were that they gave you two effects for the price of one. The downside, however, was that you could use one effect or the other, but you couldn't switch the thing off. That was okay in the studio, but on a stage at a big venue things could get pretty dicey. That would never be a problem for the likes of Hawkwind's Mike Brock because the odds are he's never played a straight note in his life, but for mere mortals like us it's more of an issue. By 1973, as you can see from the photo, Colorsound had put two buttons through the rocker pedal, allowing you to switch to either effect on or off. It's a valiant effort, but imagine a stack-heeled guitarist, drunk out of his mind (at the very least), trying to negotiate those switches mid-gig... you'd have to be Fred Astaire to stand any sort of chance. But if you want the great sounds this pedal can provide, it'll cost you around £250 to £300 – admittedly a darn sight more than the £15 price tag it had when they were first released

1973 Telecaster Custom

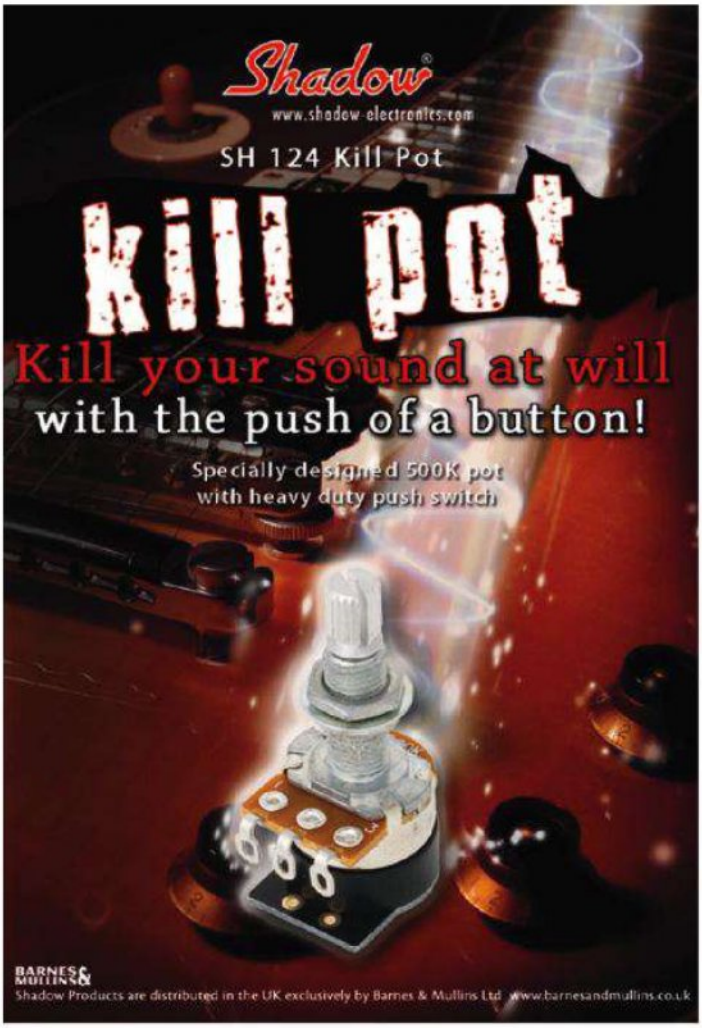


A lot of guys were putting humbuckers in their Teles back in the early '70s, including Albert Lee, Ron Wood and, of course, Keith Richards. All credit to Fender – they did their homework and released the Tele Custom and its two-humbucker compatriot, the Tele Deluxe. Add in some Les Paul-like details, such as the top horn toggle switch and the four knobs, and you have a sensibly laid-out instrument that sounds much beefier than a normal Tele... absolutely perfect for rhythm playing. It's a welcome surprise, but not a shock, to see that young bands like Franz Ferdinand have started using Customs and Deluxes over the past 10 years. Prices of the originals have gone up considerably, hitting the £2000 to £2500 mark on occasion

1973 Martin D12-28



This is an industry-standard acoustic 12-string in the same way that a Rickenbacker 12-string is the electric benchmark. And quite rightly so, as it's the best one out there – a real desert island guitar that'd you make sure was on the lifeboat with you before the ship went down. Why? Well, for a start, the feel and the spacing of the strings just can't be beaten. Add to that the fact that the tone is perfectly balanced, with the right amount of bottom end and midrange, while the treble is very easy on the ear. These were never cheap, costing around £220 to £225 in 1973. Nowadays one from that year would cost £2000 to £2500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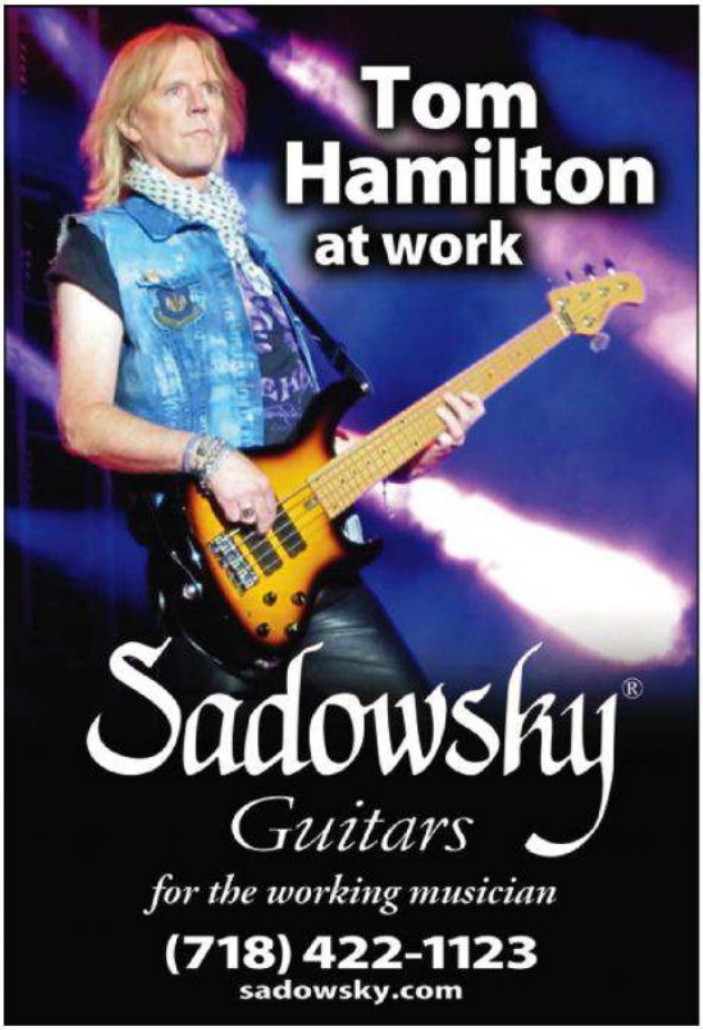
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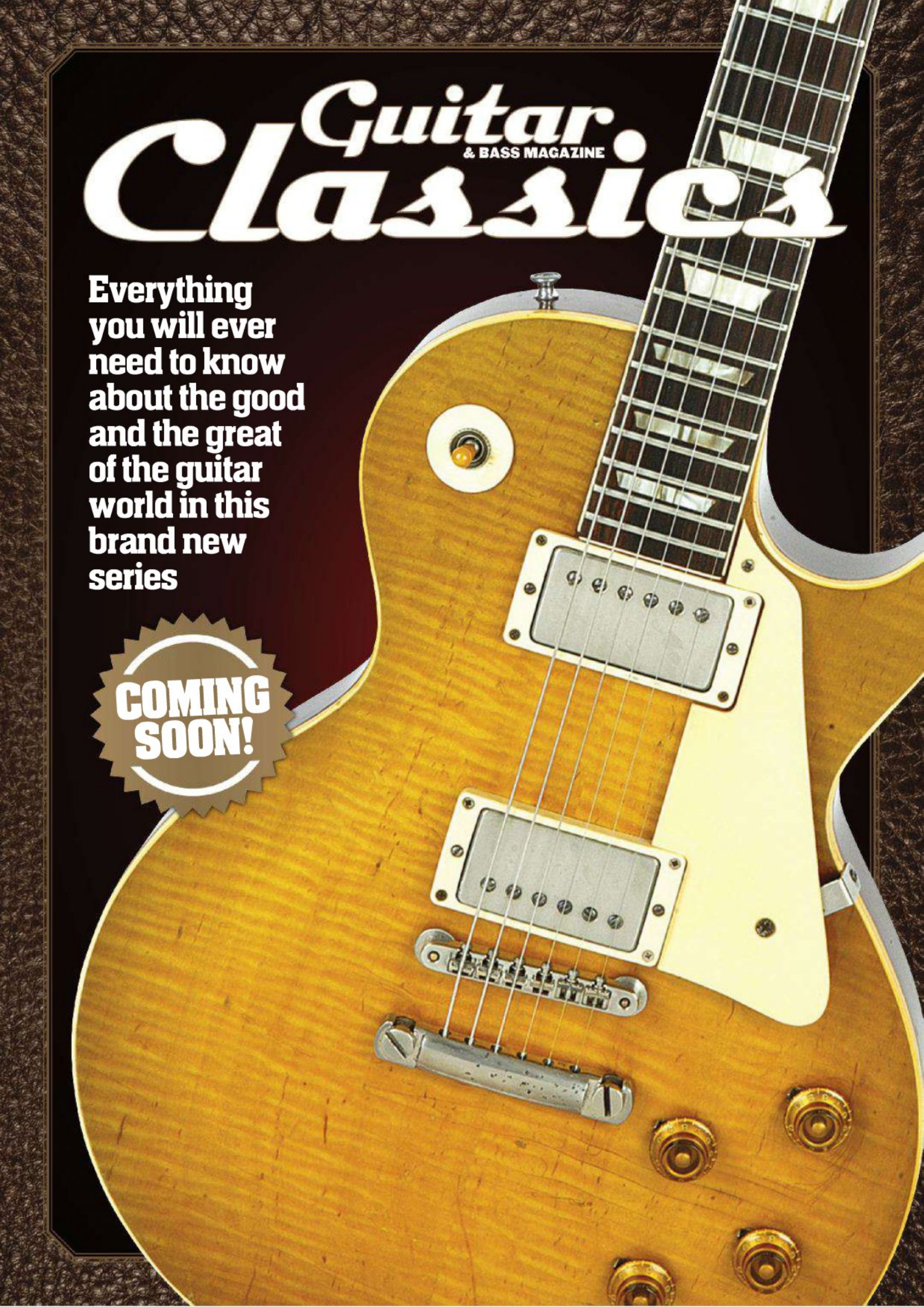
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Ray Majors displaying fine footwear and a Martin Colletti guitar, bought for just £4 and converted to a seven-string

Rock'n'roll Solution

Ray Majors saw Hendrix rip up the stage and went on to play with a host of big names. Today, as Michael Heatley finds out, he maintains a highly idiosyncratic electric and acoustic guitar collection that echoes his very individual tastes

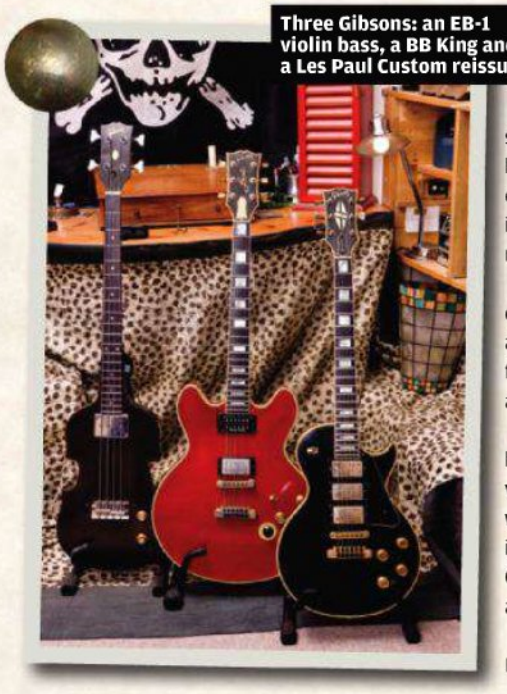
Ray Majors may not be a household name, but he's currently contributing to his sixth decade as part of the British rock scene. Whether playing alongside Lemmy in late '60s psychedelic outfit Opal Butterfly, stepping into Mick Ronson's shoes in Mott The Hoople after Ian Hunter left, replacing Top Topham in the 1990s Yardbirds or in his current work alongside wife Sandy Dillon, he's made both his reputation and a good living through his six-string abilities.

His guitar collection is as eclectic as his career – though he's not one for hanging on to his past. 'I'm probably on my own when I say I don't care for old guitars,' he admits cheerfully. 'I would be so worried that they'd get stolen. I think the Custom Shop guitars by Fender and Gibson are as good, if not better, than the originals.'

Ray was a Gibson player when he began his rock career alongside Lemmy in Opal Butterfly. 'I had a beautiful ES-335TDC that my Aunt Peggy got for me. I don't know how she came by it, but it was my pride and joy.' That replaced his first guitar, a Watkins Rapier. 'We had to hide it from my father 'cos he would've gone mad at Mum for spending 29 guineas on what he said was a five-minute wonder – well, it's lasted a bit longer than that! I sold it to my mate Phil Harris when he was a budding guitarist for about 12 quid plus case.'

His big break was joining Hackensack, recording artists of the early '70s fronted by singer Nicky Moore who somehow failed to emulate contemporaries like Free and Mott despite supporting them on many occasions. Ray bought a Gibson Melody Maker for £90 from Mick Ralphs, who was still in Mott at the time, replaced its P90 with a humbucker, then sold it to Paul Kossoff when they opened for Free on a tour. 'He heard it, borrowed it and wouldn't give it me back until his manager made me an offer,' says Ray.

'I had an old Seymour Duncan amp with about 18 valves and a fan to keep it cool. One night I was doing a gig at the 100 Club and it burst into flames, so that was the end of that'



Three Gibsons: an EB-1 violin bass, a BB King and a Les Paul Custom reissue

Another long-gone Gibson from Hackensack days was bought with his share of the band's advance and served him through to Mott's first album. 'My white Les Paul SG Custom was amazing,' he says. 'That guitar was the business.'

These days, Ray has three Gibsons. The EB-1 bass is his sole four-stringer and was bought 12 years ago from a friend in Richmond. 'I'd always wanted one ever since I saw Felix Pappalardi in Mountain.' The black three-pickup Les Paul Custom, a reissue from the '70s, is a more recent acquisition and was a present from Sandy.

But the guitar that's seen most use is a ES-355 Lucille, BB King's signature model. It was one of several guitars he owns sourced by a good friend, Dave Liddle from Q7 Guitars. 'Dave is sadly no longer with us, but he found me some beautiful instruments.' Ray used the guitar with the Yardbirds, and continued to do so in his earliest days with Sandy Dillon, whose band he joined soon after. 'For the *Skating* album [1996] I was using Lucille and my Telecaster through an old amp made by Seymour Duncan,' he remembers. 'Trouble was it was totally valve... about 18 of 'em with a fan to keep it cool. One night I was doing a gig at the 100 Club and it burst into flames, so that was the end of that...'

Lucille saw further use, this time through a reissue Vox AC30, when he played on sessions for 1998 releases from the Downliners Sect (*Dangerous Ground*) and Quiet Melon (*Money Due*). Ray was a good friend of late Quiet Melon leader Art Wood, and jammed with his famous brother Ron a few times. 'That was fun; he keeps coming up with stuff, keeps you on your toes.'

Ray's Pignose guitar is more than just a gimmick or practice instrument. 'It's a fun guitar and

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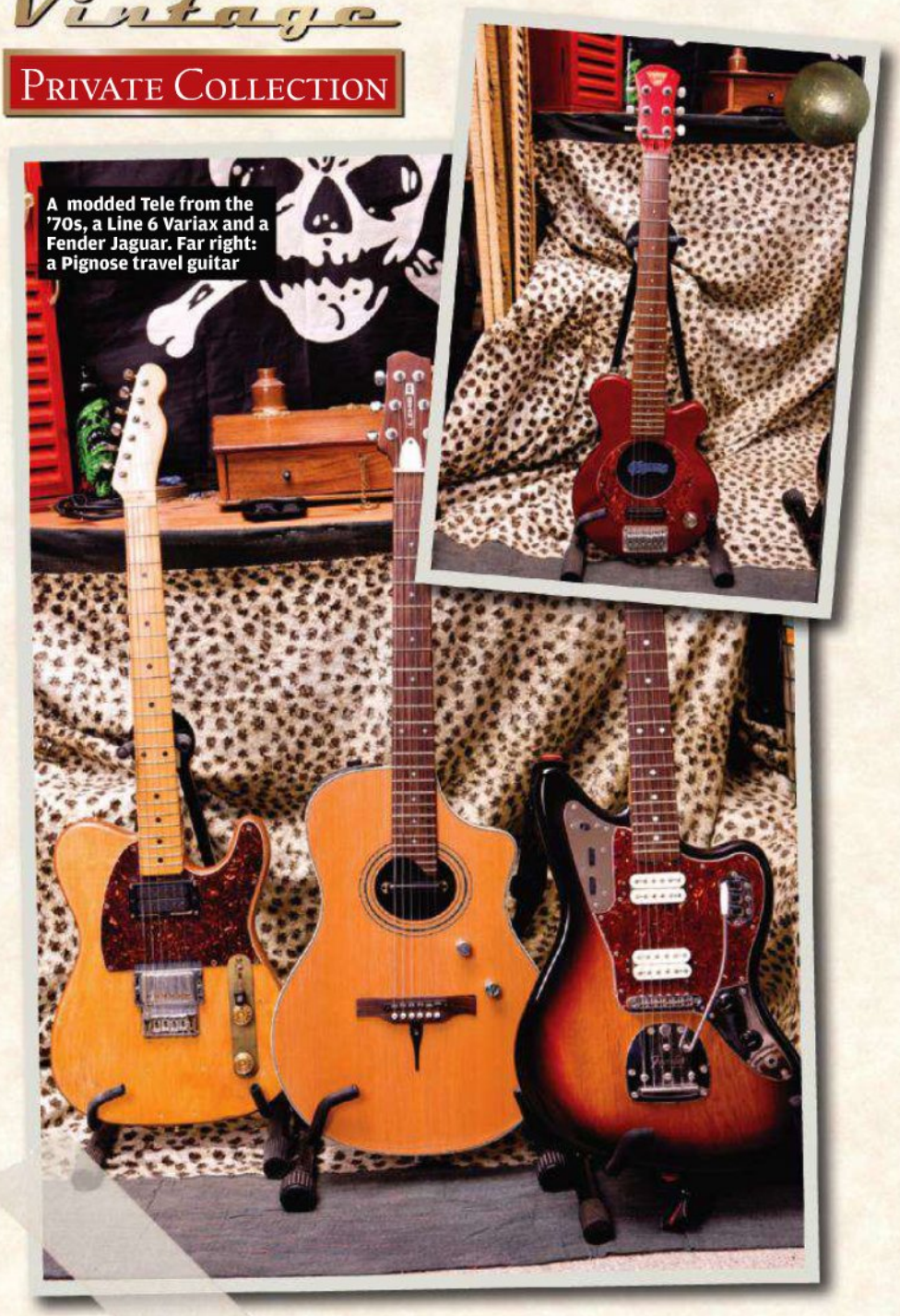

A modded Tele from the '70s, a Line 6 Variax and a Fender Jaguar. Far right: a Pignose travel guitar

has been on many records; it was a gift from one of my students.' Ray played it on the Sandy Dillon albums *Nobody's Sweetheart* (2003) and *Pull The Strings* (2006).

His Telecaster was bought from Friendly River Fretted Instruments in Boston around 1978 and was used by Ray both live and in the studio with the British Lions, the band Mott turned into after the addition of ex-Medicine Head singer John Fiddler. 'It started life as a stock Tele but Dave Liddle added a tortoiseshell pickguard. He also humbuckered it up after seeing Prince and The Revolution years ago.'

The Tele also saw action, tuned down to C, when Ray recorded his 2000 solo album *First Poison*. It has a push/pull coil-tap pot, 'so really you get the worst of both belds!' beams Ray, relishing a favourite spoonerism, a Mott The Hoople in-joke.

Being married to an American singer-songwriter, and a Massachusetts native at that, means Ray has acquired an intimate knowledge of the area's music emporia. His Fender Jaguar was bought at the Guitar Center in Boston, and like the Tele it has idiosyncrasies in the pickup department. Its humbuckers were coil-tapped when he bought it, and Ray believes it can offer about 18 workable sounds. 'The floating tremolo unit is superb; I use it all the time.'

'The Line 6 Variax is a strange beast. It does sounds from subsonic bass to a Dobro in open G'

Ray's two acoustics are very different. 'The Variax is a strange beast,' he says. 'It has a microcomputer on board with a sounds from subsonic bass to a Dobro in open G. I bought this from the Acoustic Centre in Spitalfields.' He longs, however, for the simplicity of a certain older guitar he borrowed for Opal Butterfly's recording of the film theme

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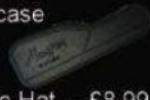

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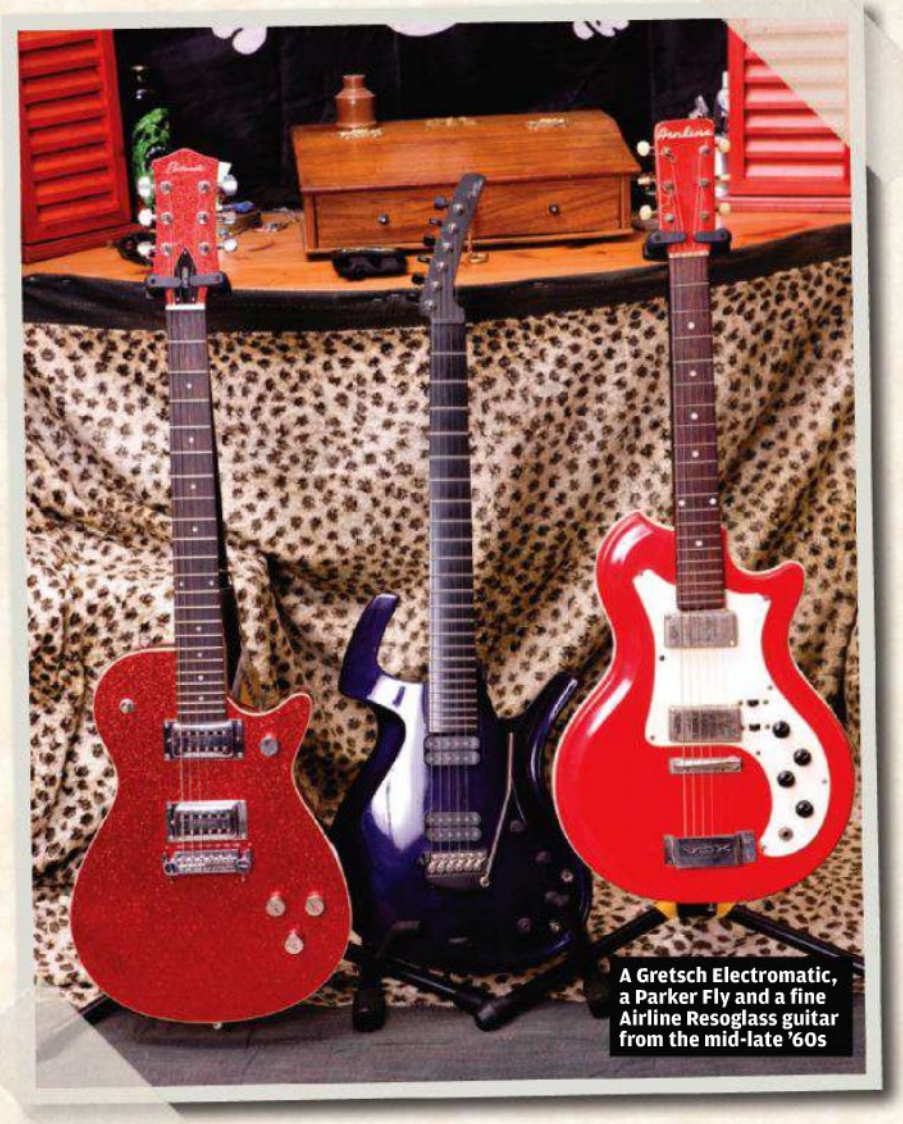

A Gretsch Electromatic, a Parker Fly and a fine Airline Resoglass guitar from the mid-late '60s

for *Groupie Girl*. 'It was an old Gibson J-45 that belonged to Donovan Leitch - we had the same manager at the time. That was a lovely guitar.' But the acoustic he would rescue first from a burning building was found at a boot fair (see page 104). 'It started out life as a Martin Colletti, and I wouldn't sell it for the world!'

Priced at five pounds and acquired for four due to the lack of a case, it was scorched on the back. 'Some kid probably annoyed his parents so much that it ended up being thrown on the fire,' laughs Ray. 'I sanded it back as far as I could and gave it to my friend Peter French, who sings with Leaf Hound, as he's got all kinds of tools.

'I asked him to slim the neck down so I could string it up as a tenor guitar. But I turned it into a seven-string, banged an old Gibson Tune-O-Matic bridge on it and slapped on a couple of chrome cowboy horses as a nod of respect to Hank Williams. It sounds a treat with a Shadow pickup squeezed in under the tailpiece.'

As befits a man who was in the tail-end of glam with Mott and still cuts a sartorial dash today, Ray likes axes that are lookers. He's particularly proud of a red sparkle Gretsch Electromatic. 'It has a fabulous finish like their drum kits, and it's a lot lighter than the Les Paul.' The carbon-fibre Parker Fly Deluxe is another unusual beast. 'It's a unique instrument with locking machineheads and full acoustic piezo circuit - it's like a stealth bomber, and it's so light!'

Completing a trio of odd shapes is a two-pickup Airline electric, the same brand recently popularised by Jack White. 'It's a short-scale guitar with that '50s sound, great for slide. It's a little gem.'

'I saw Jimi Hendrix when I was 17. It blew me away – the sheer bravado, the blues feeling, the whole guitar hero thing'

Ray is a Fender man first and foremost, which has much to do with witnessing his first guitar idol. 'I saw Jimi Hendrix when I was 17 years old in a few small clubs. It just blew me away - the sheer bravado, the blues feeling, the whole guitar hero thing, it was all there.'

That experience was the inspiration for a Lake Placid blue Strat, a guitar he bought for £120 in 1967 when still in his teens and which he owned for a couple of years. But the instrument he's

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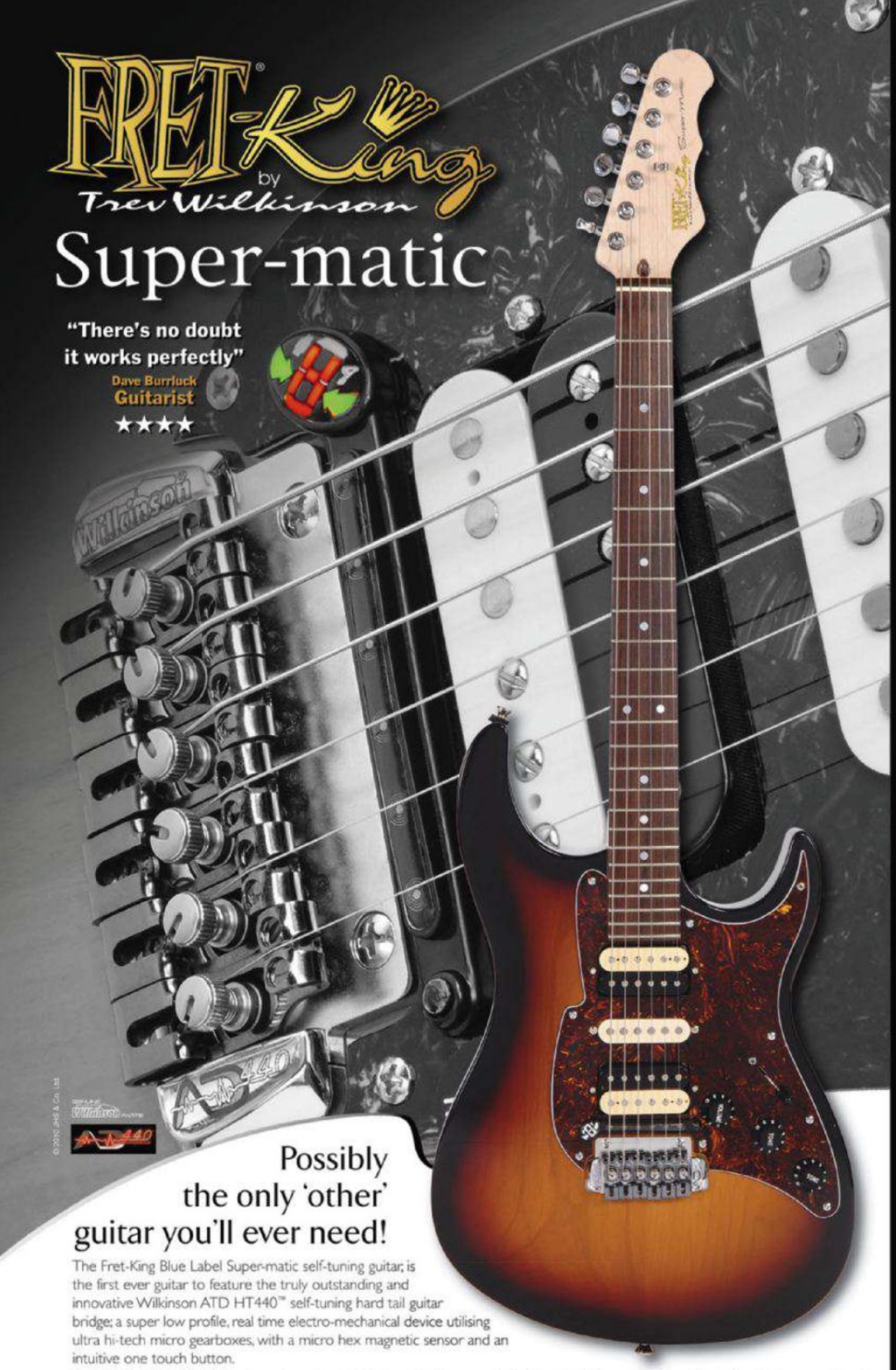

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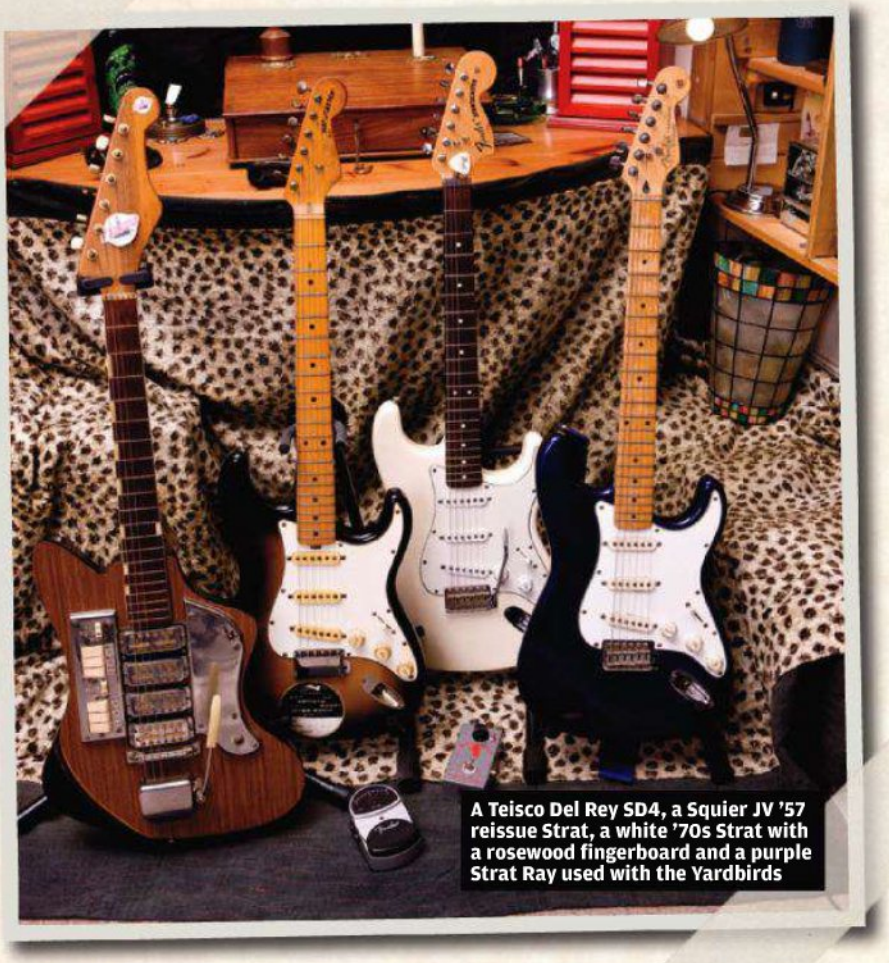
most associated with is even more Hendrix-looking – a white '70s Strat acquired when he joined Mott in 1975 and used throughout that band's brief, brash two-album career.

Ray toted a Gibson when he went down to Clearwell Castle with the band to cut *Drive On*. 'But Pete [aka bass player Overend] Watts had about 30-odd guitars he'd collected over the years from touring with Mott, so Stratocasters were the order of the day along with a few SG Juniors, Hagstroms and Voxes. The guitar I used most was an early '50s hardtail Stratocaster that had a really low serial number – 0052, or something like that. We used that Strat for *Drive On* and *Shouting And Pointing*, though actually the last one was recorded at the Manor with engineers Eddie Kramer and Mick Glossop.'

Ray no longer has that Strat, which would now be celebrating its half-century with a price tag to match, but recently acquired a lookalike reissue. He's been battling throat cancer, happily to good effect, and a rosewood neck reissue was a present from his wife to take his mind off the radiotherapy. 'It's better than the Mott one; that was old, this one's new and it feels really great.'

Yet another present from Sandy is a sunburst maple neck Strat. 'It's a real worker, with a springy sound and a lovely neck.' It evokes memories of a '62 Stratocaster he once owned which had a filed-down fretboard thanks to its previous keeper, one Steve Marriott. 'Steve said he liked a low action; it went like a rocket!'

The purple Stratocaster in Ray's current collection has 'a real dark tone'. It was another Dave Liddle find, and it was used during a stint in the Yardbirds in the mid-'90s. The interloper in the Strat group is a Teisco Del Rey SD4; 'It's a bit of a rare bird,' says Ray, 'another find from Dave Liddle. It has the surf sound, and put through a Lazy J combo with reverb and tremolo it's superb. Ry Cooder uses one of these for slide. The Teisco Del Rey and the Airline are the oldest instruments that I own.'



A Teisco Del Rey SD4, a Squier JV '57 reissue Strat, a white '70s Strat with a rosewood fingerboard and a purple Strat Ray used with the Yardbirds

'The Teisco Del Rey is a bit of a rare bird. It has the surf sound, and through a Lazy J combo with reverb and tremolo it's superb. Ry Cooder uses one of these for slide'

A metal-body Dobro with sweet Lily Of The Valley engraving, a Deering-made guitjo and a no-name reso

Ray spotlights two big investments that have paid off for him, particularly in interpreting Sandy Dillon's rootsy music. The first is a Dobro with a Lily Of The Valley engraving. 'The salesman at Daddy's Junkie Music in Boston said "There's an old Dobro down in the basement you can have a squeak on, and if you like it we can make a deal." Between Sandy and myself we beat the guy down to $1000 with a case, two sets of flatwounds, a strap and picks!

'The other is my Deering Deluxe six-string banjo. It came to me through a friend in Boston for a very reasonable price, and is now worth considerably more than I got it for.' Ray played both these instruments on Sandy's *Electric Chair, East Overshoe, Pull The Strings* and *Living In Dreams* CDs, plus his own solo album.

Ray's current stage set up with Sandy is the Fender Jaguar fed through a Line 6 M13 effects unit to a Lazy J amplifier with extension speakers. He complements this with a variety of exotic shoes, a pair of which he sports in our pictures. 'They come from a place called Hot Topic in the States. Me and Sandy always wear something that's a little out there, and they're really good when you gotta hit the pedalboard.'

Ray's past history may be impressive but he's still very much a working musician. 'I'm in the final stages of the mixing and production of Sandy's album *Shipwrek'd* and will be recording her next project based on the six banned poems of Baudelaire entitled *Les Epaves*.' Not only that, but he's already sketched out a plan for his second solo album for Angel Air Records entitled *7% Solution*. This will be recorded at Rik Lander's eco-studio in Bristol, and is likely to be filmed. Last but not least, an autobiographical book about life on the road with Mott, British Lions, Yardbirds, Opal Butterfly and more is in its final editing stage.

While Ray has successfully fought health battles in recent years, one ailment he believes will stay with him forever is MAGAS (Middle Aged Guitar Acquisition Syndrome). 'Sandy and I often laugh about this. When she finds me on rare guitar sites she says "Oh no, not another MAGAS hour!" So I'm afraid my love of cars, guitars and girls will continue.' We'll drink to that.

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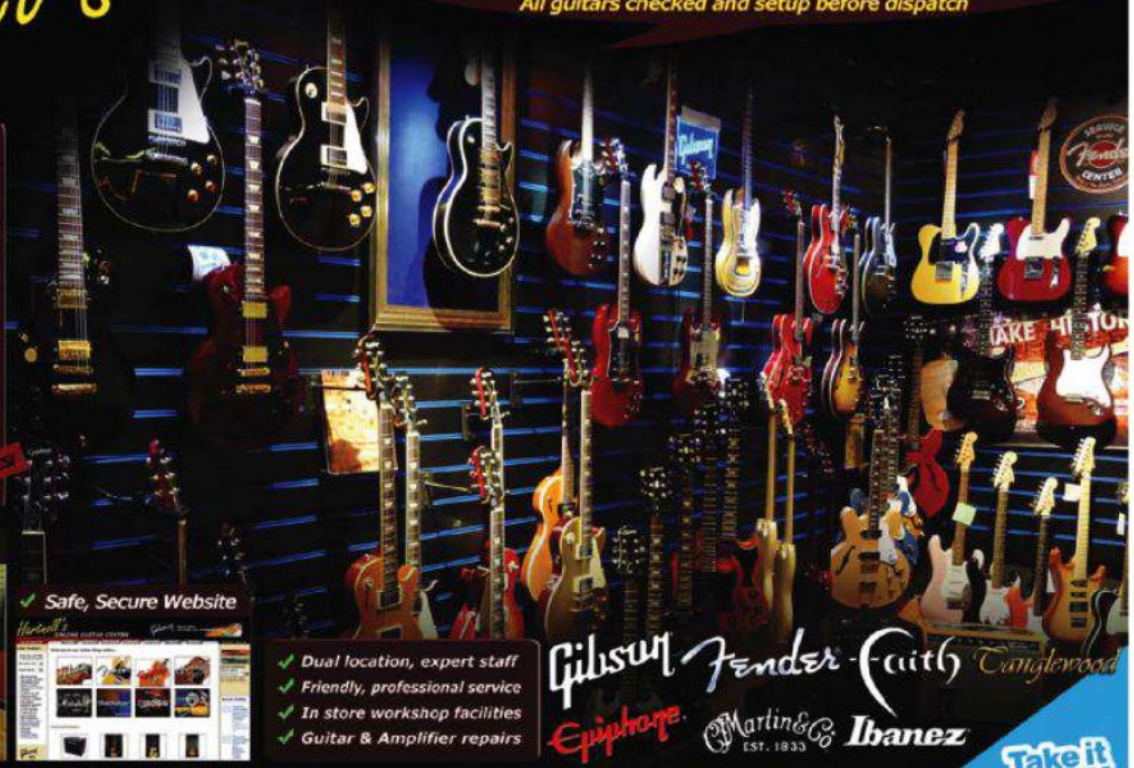

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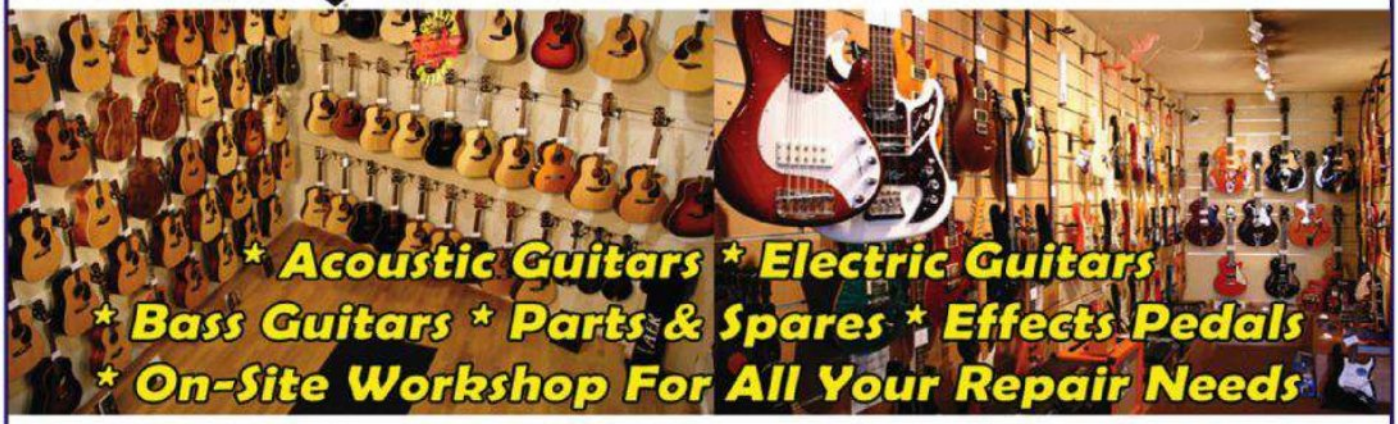

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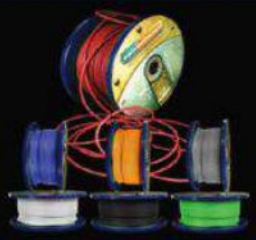

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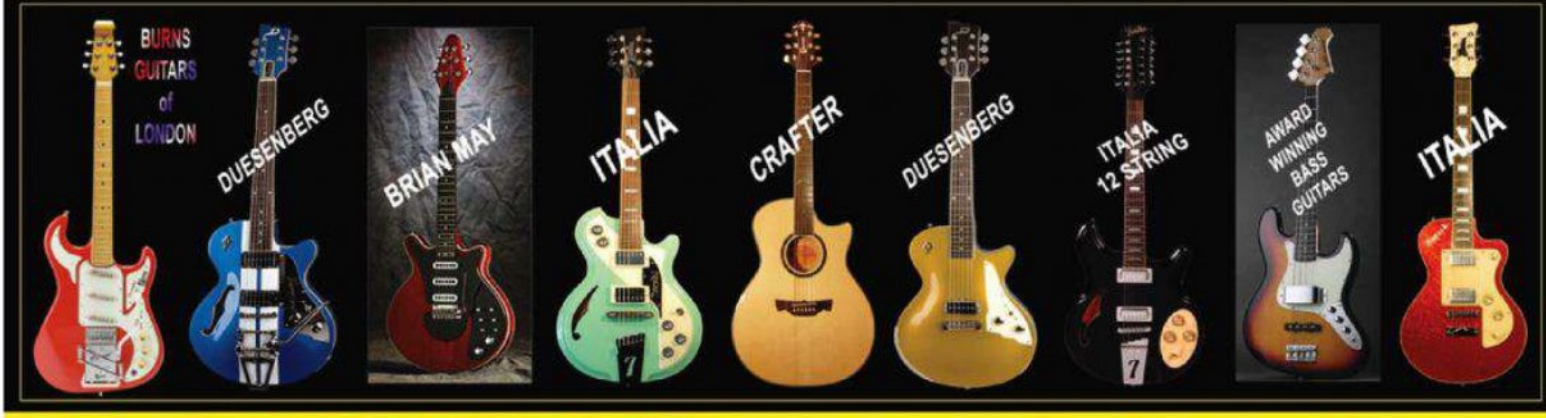
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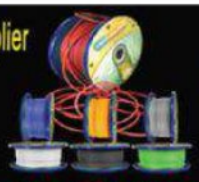

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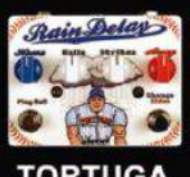

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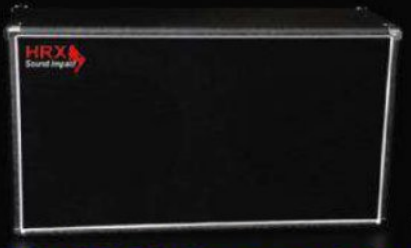

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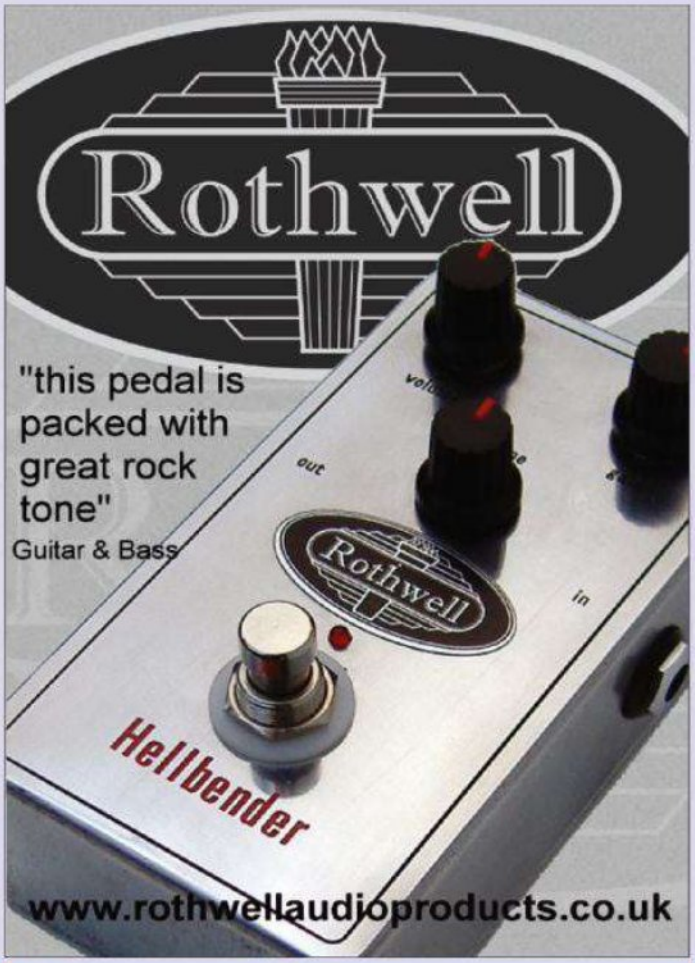

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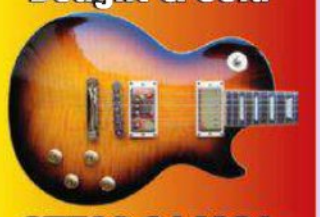

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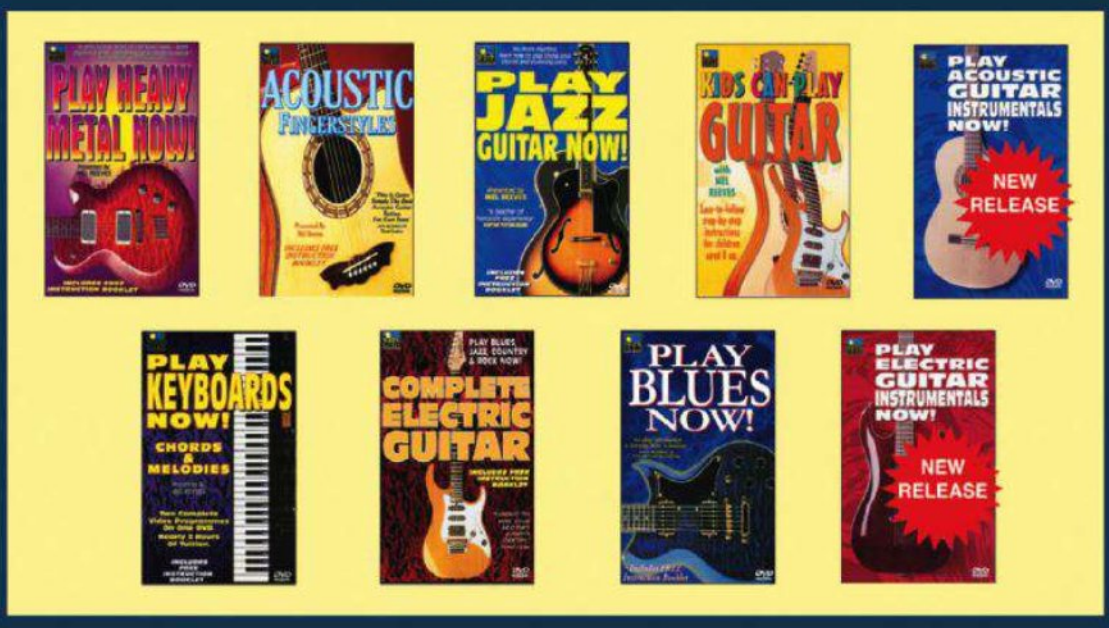

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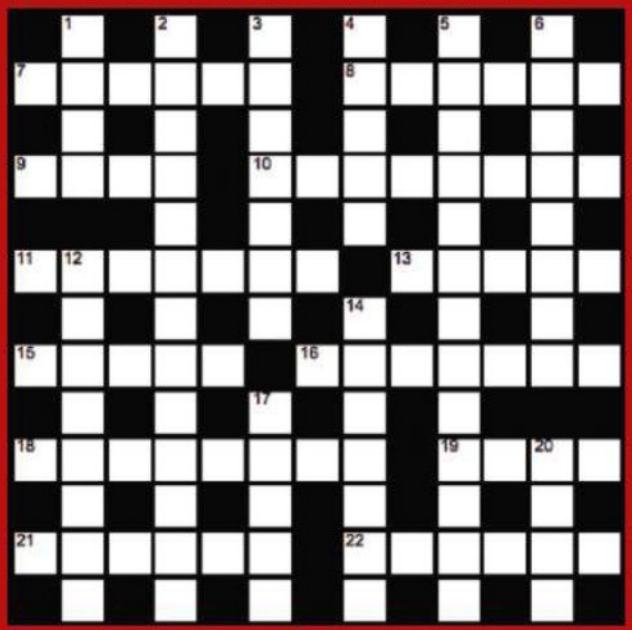

ACROSS

7. Semi gambling joint (6)
8. Neo-classicalist __ __ Roth (3,3)
9. Nick's bottom string? (3,1)
10. Tiny mistake for Electro-Harmonix pedal (4,4)
11. Apes ZZ Top player (7)
13. Some talent shows heavy rock genre (5)
15. Dinosaur Marc ___ (5)
16. Friend follows baby absolutely (7)
18. Dream has confusion describing old style version of 10 Across (4,4)
19. Shows measure of hard disk? (4)
21. Artist formerly known as Mr Nelson publishes we hear (6)
22. For weighing practise patterns (6)

DOWN

1. Tricky chords? Initially cheat and play open! (4)
2. Rover boasting about OCS hit (5,4,4)
3. K.K. _____ (Judas Priest) (7)
4. London manufacturer smarts? (5)
5. Texas bluesman in huge jam I'm vain about (13)
6. Dance at the green? (4,4)
12. Adroitly mixed worshipful behaviour (8)
14. Do lutes get distorted at maximum volume? (7)
17. Headgear sung about by 21 across heard to be fruity (5)
20. TV choir show in jungle experience (4)

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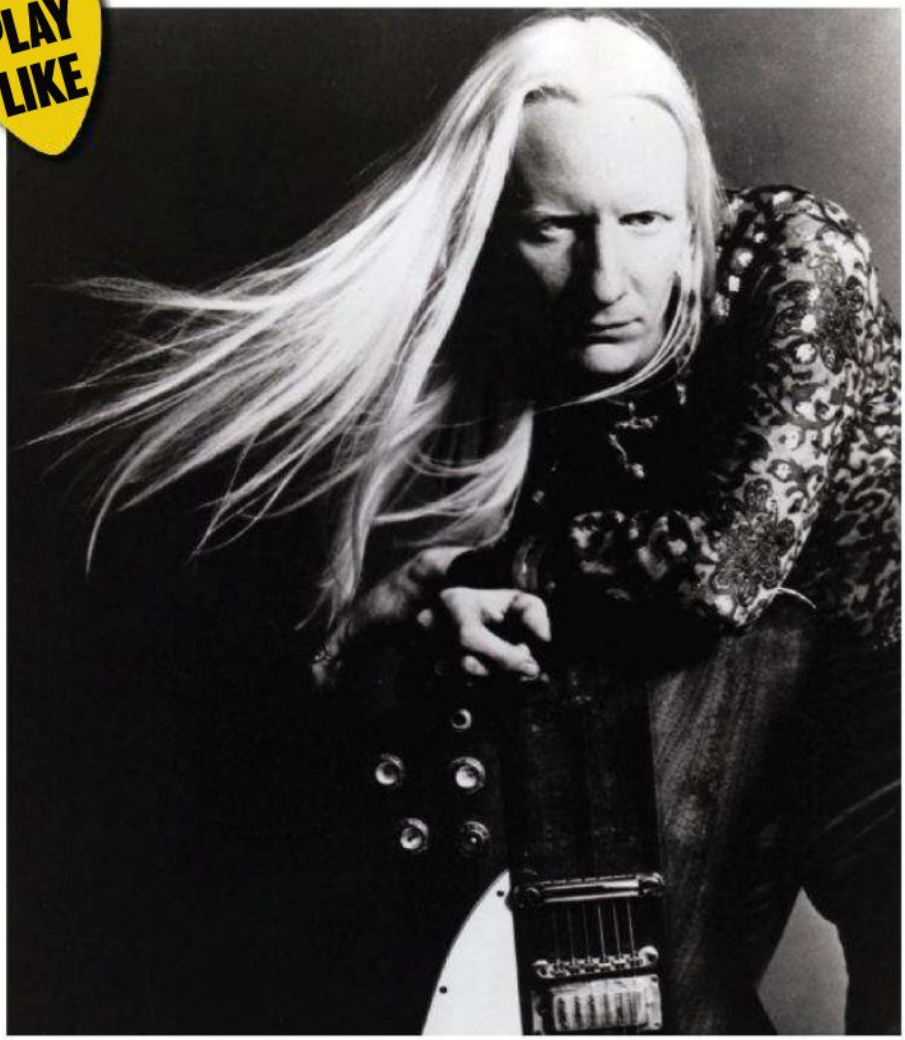


Winter's Equipment

Speaking about his solo album *Let Me In* back in 1991, Winter gave *Guitar & Bass* a rundown of his gear. 'I'm playing my Gibson Firebird on the electric slide stuff, and I'm using a headless Laser guitar that a friend of mine from Austin, Texas designed – that's pretty much my main guitar. For the acoustic stuff I'm using a couple of National guitars – an old one for slide and one from about 1970 that I used on the non-slide stuff.'

Besides being an electrifying performer, Winter also memorably revived Muddy Waters' career when he produced and played on Waters' *Hard Again* (1977), when Winter started using Music Man amps.

'I've had Music Man amps ever since working with Muddy. I'm still using the same ones that I got back in 1975-'76, with Celestion speakers. I set the treble on full with no middle and no bass, the volume is usually on 8 and the guitar volume all the way up. I used an MXR chorus pedal on a couple of tracks on the album, and I use it live a lot 'cause it has a nice big sound with the trio.'

Whether delivering hardcore country blues or blazing electric slide guitar, Johnny Winter's style is always unmistakable. Douglas Noble dissects a selection of his methods in standard plus open D and open A tuning

Johnny Winter

Guitar Techniques

Texas legend Johnny Winter is known for his scorching guitar style, but he sees himself as an interpreter of songs rather than a songwriter. Besides reworking classic blues numbers such as BB King's *Be Careful With A Fool* and Sonny Boy Williamson's *Good Morning Little School Girl*, Winter also stamped his own identity on Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited*, the Stones' *Jumpin' Jack Flash* and Rick Derringer's *Rock'n'Roll, Hoochie Koo*. Though the rock'n'roll side has been a big part of his live repertoire, in recent years he's favoured the blues songs. 'Most of the stuff I do is fairly old... we're not playing any rock and roll at all now.'

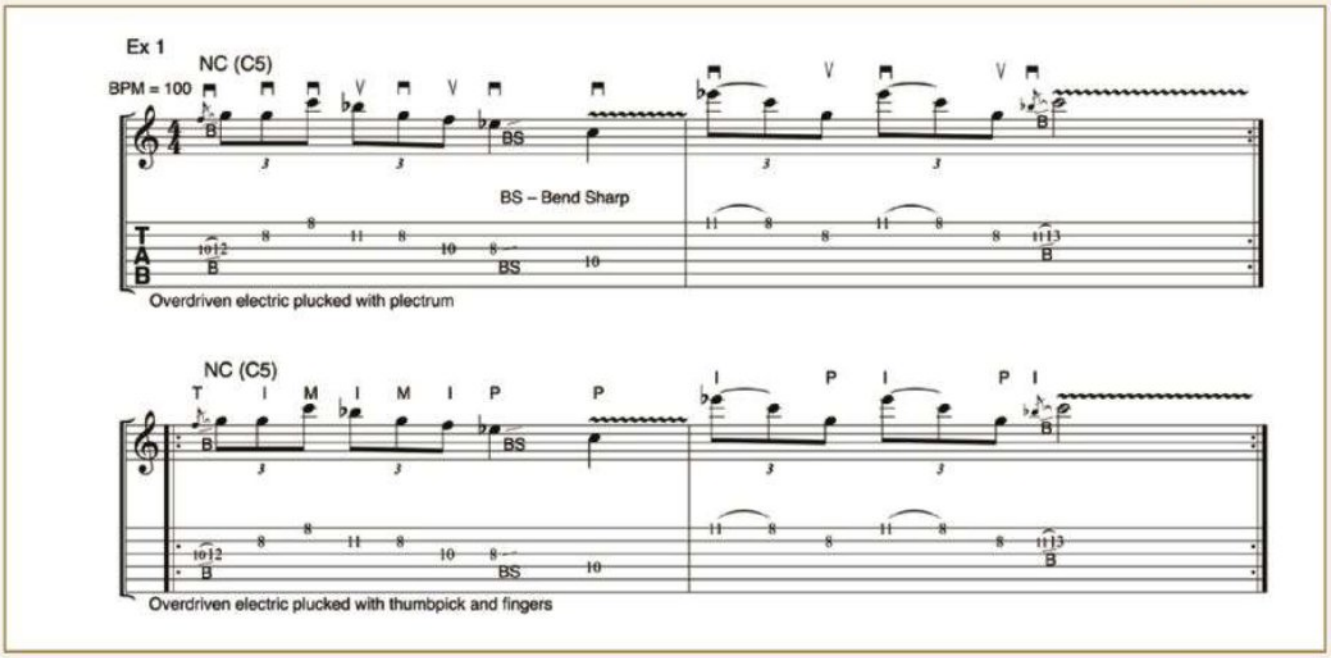
Winter has an unusual right hand technique. 'I use a thumbpick all the time, but I play with the first and second fingers too,' he says. 'It seems like I'm playing more and more with my fingers. I really like the sound. I never have used a regular pick – I just started out using a thumbpick.' Exercise 1 looks at this technique.

Winter often plays slide in open tuning. 'For playing slide I use open A or open E tuning, depending on the key I'm singing in. Between these two tunings I can get any key I want to play in. Recently I've also been using open D tuning.' Open E (E B E G# B E) and open D (D A D F# A D) share the same relationships between the strings: from bottom to top it's root, fifth, root, major third, fifth and root, but in open D the strings are all two frets or a tone lower than open E. In open A tuning (E A E C# A E) there's a different relationship between the strings: from bottom to top it's fifth, root, fifth, major third, root and fifth.

'For damping notes I use the fingers of my left hand – I kinda trail them along behind the slide. I'd probably have to do it to check – I don't think about these things... I just do 'em! I've been using the same piece of pipe since '68 – I went to a plumbing supply place and had a length of pipe cut into links. I've never found a slide in a store that's small enough for my little finger.'

Ex 1: Stock licks, Winter-style

4/4 Time

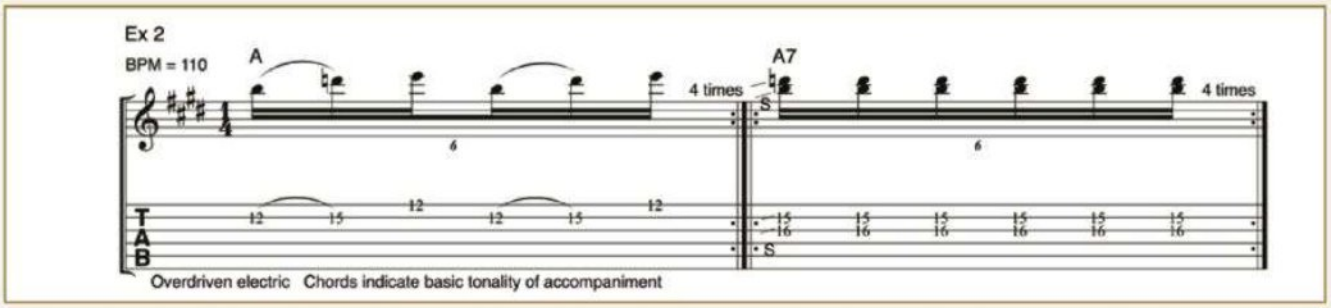


Here's a couple of blues licks based on the C pentatonic minor scale (C Eb F G Bb C), shown twice. The first line is to be plucked with the plectrum, with suggested pick directions shown above the music notation (the square-ish symbol is a downstroke, the 'V' symbol is an upstroke). The second line is the same couple of phrases and should be played with thumbpick, index and middle finger, as Winter might play them. Of course, they're exactly the same pitches, but the phrase has a different feel and tone depending on whether you use a flatpick or thumbpick and fingers. On the second line, we've eschewed traditional classical guitar nomenclature (which is actually based on the Spanish words for these fingers, but we don't need to go there) to denote the picking pattern, settling for the rather more obvious 'T' for thumb, 'I' for index finger and 'M' for middle finger.

Don't get too bogged down in using this exact picking pattern - as with his slide technique, Winter doesn't think too much about the detailed mechanics of his technique... he simply does what comes naturally. The ubiquitous triplet on the consecutive top three strings at the start of each line lends itself very nicely to three consecutive downstrokes, but it also lends itself equally well to the 'Thumb/Index/Middle' plucking denoted at the start of the second line. If you're not used to playing blues phrases with your fingers, it may feel a little strange at first... but persevere.

Ex 2: Using repeated licks

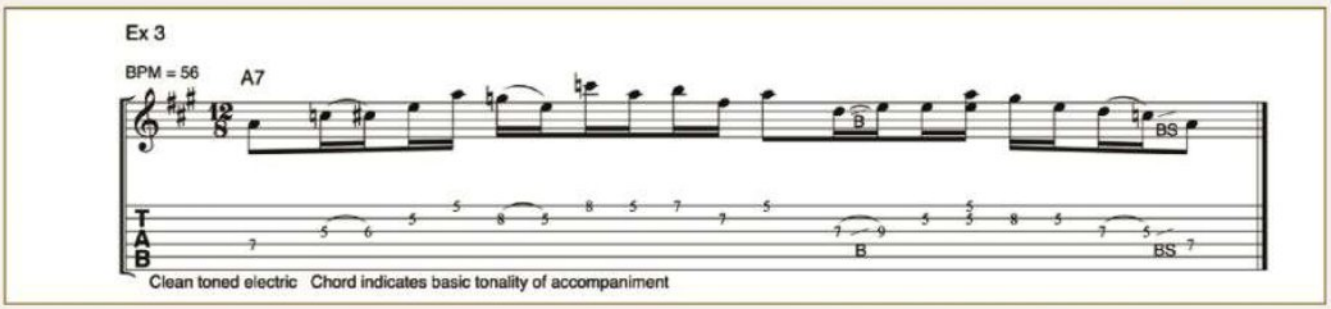
1/4 Time



Like many blues guitarists on the rockier aside of the spectrum, Winter uses repeated licks to build up tension. Our first one is similar to a lick in *Bad Luck Situation* at 1:30, the second pays tribute to one at 1:45. It's a 12-bar blues in E, and these licks are played over chord IV (A) and IV7 (A7), although both work equally well over chord I. These can be played with a pick, but for the real Winter sound you'll need to use a thumbpick, index and middle fingers.

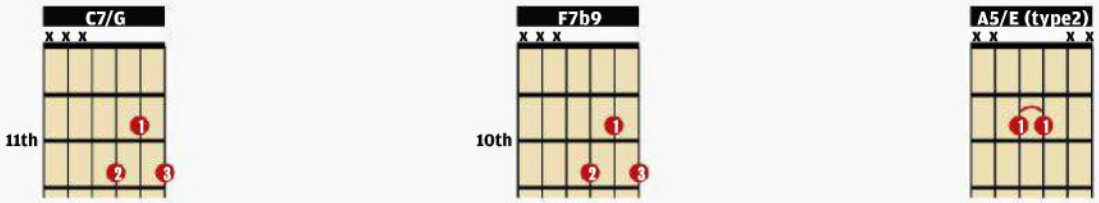
Ex 3: Inventive bluesy shredding

12/8 Time



Here's our take on a great phrase from *It Was Raining* at 3:11. Played over chord I7 (A7) in bar 11 of a 12-bar blues, it's based on the A pentatonic minor scale, A C D E G A, but with a hammer-on from the minor third (C) to the major third (C#) on the first beat, plus the second note of the scale (B) and the major sixth (F#) during the second beat. These notes could be analysed as coming from the A pentatonic major scale, which is A B C# E F# A.

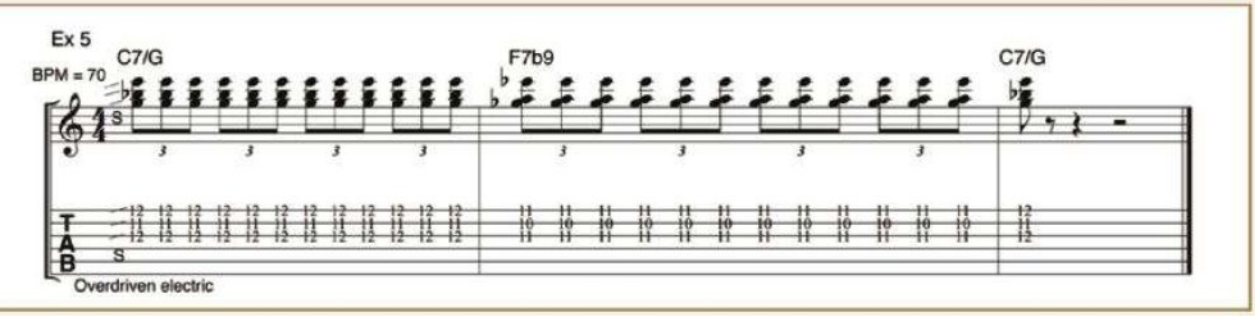
Ex 4: C7/G, F7b9, and A5/E (type 2) chords



This voicing of C7/G is the basic open D7 chord from the bottom of the fretboard moved up to frets 11 and 12. F7b9 is the same chord shape moved down by one fret, so it could be thought of as B7/F#... but because of the way it's used in Ex 5 – as a voicing of chord IV in the key of C – it's named in relation to an F root. This voicing of F7b9 actually omits the root note, so there's no F in the chord, and the b9 note, the G flat, is at the bottom of the chord. The voicing of A5/E (type 2) is a fretted version of the same chord produced using open fourth and third strings in open A tuning, as used in Ex 6.

Ex 5: 7th chord lick

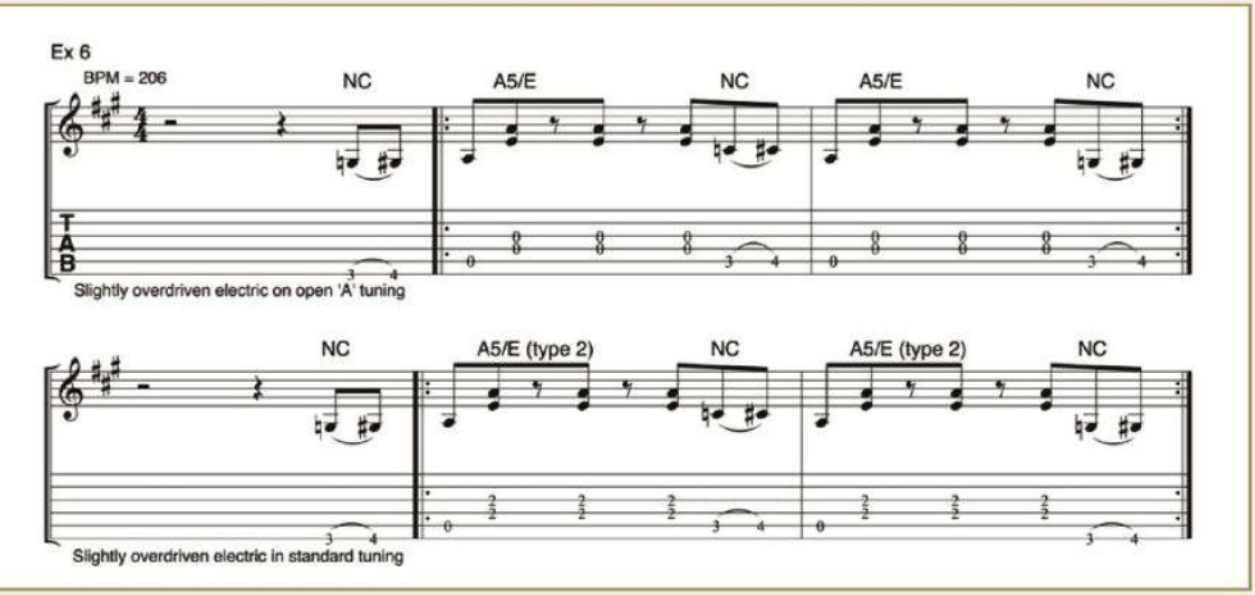
4/4 Time



Winter starts the second verse of *Be Careful With A Fool* at 0:56 with a seventh chord on the top three strings – the C7/G chord from Ex 4 – then moves the shape down a fret for the second bar over chord IV, then back up a fret. This is a common blues move, used by Muddy Waters and Robert Johnson, and later by Hendrix at the start of *Red House*. Winters also did it in *It Was Raining* at 3:19 with an A7/G – the C7/G shape with the first finger at the eighth fret.

Ex 6: Open A tuning

4/4 Time



Here's a riff similar to that used by Winter at the start of his John Lee Hooker-influenced composition *Mean Town Blues*, which is played in open A tuning – E A E A C# E from bottom to top. This means strings four, three and two are all tuned a tone higher than normal, so be sure to tune up slowly to avoid breaking any strings. Alternatively, try the version of the riff in line 2 of the exercise – it's the same riff as line 1, but in standard tuning. Even better, try both versions of the riff and compare the sound and feel. The fingering for A5/E (type 2) is shown in Ex 4, and it's much simpler than the name suggests. To get closer to Winter's riff it's necessary to play in open A with fingers (remember, that's with a thumbpick on the thumb) but a perfectly acceptable version can be played in standard tuning with fingers or even with a plectrum – but use upstrokes for the A5/E type 2 chords.

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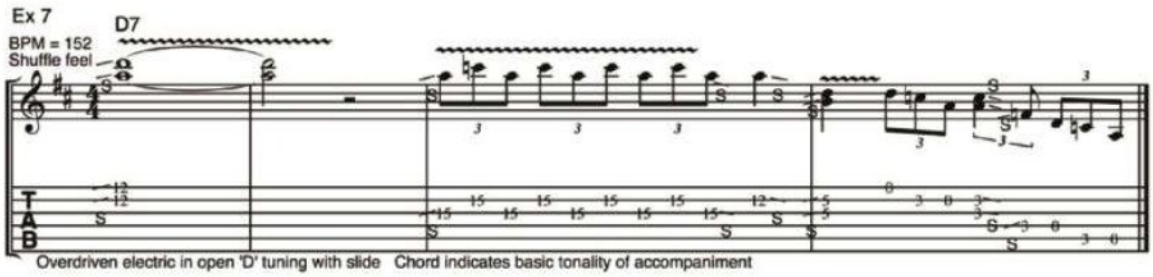
Ex 7: Highway 61 Revisited intro

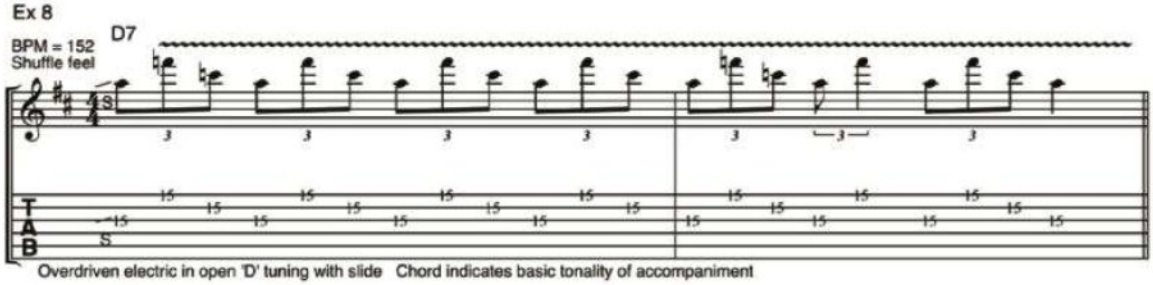
4/4 Time



Played in open D tuning, the exercise shows three phrases similar to those used by Winter at the start of his version of Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited*. Open D tuning is D A D F# A D from bottom string to top string, so unlike open A, none of the alterations are made upwards – the alterations from standard tuning are all downwards, so there's less of a chance of breaking a string. Remember, open E and open D tuning share the same relations between the strings – from bottom to top string it's root, fifth, root, third, fifth and root, but with open D being two frets or a tone lower than open E – and Winter has actually performed *Highway 61 Revisited* in open E tuning. Bear in mind that Winter wears the slide on his pinky and uses the other fretting hand fingers trailing behind the slide to damp unwanted strings. It's also a useful method as it leaves the first three fingers unencumbered for playing chords.

Ex 8: Highway 61 Revisited triplet lick in open D

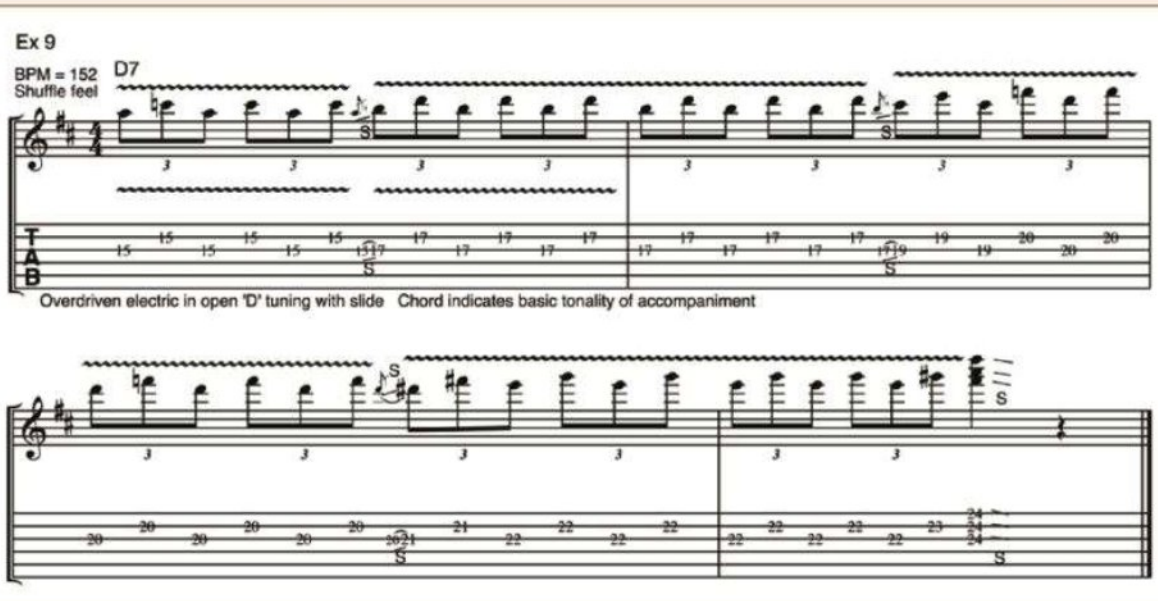
4/4 Time



This is similar to a slide phrase in *Highway 61 Revisited* at 4:06. Barring the top three strings at the 15th fret in open D produces A, C and F – the fifth, minor seventh and minor third. Winter milks these notes using vibrato and plays a third string, top string, second string triplet (fifth, minor third, minor seventh). 'The one slide player I learnt the most from was definitely Robert Johnson. He's quite difficult to steal licks from, but my favourite is *Hellhound On My Trail* – it's the strangest, most mournful and bluesy song he did.' *Hellhound* was in open E, which shares the same intervals as open D.

Ex 9: Highway 61 Revisited ascending triplet lick in open D

4/4 Time



Slightly later in *Highway 61 Revisited*, at 4:22, Winter plays a series of ascending triplet phrases using the slide and alternating between strings three and two. Open D tuning has a minor third interval between these two strings, and Winter makes use of how this interval works in different ways against the basic accompaniment tonality of D7. For example, the first combination of notes – A and C – is the fifth and minor seventh, and then the next combination of notes – B and D – is the major sixth and root. The exercise shows how this two-string slide barré can be moved up the fretboard.

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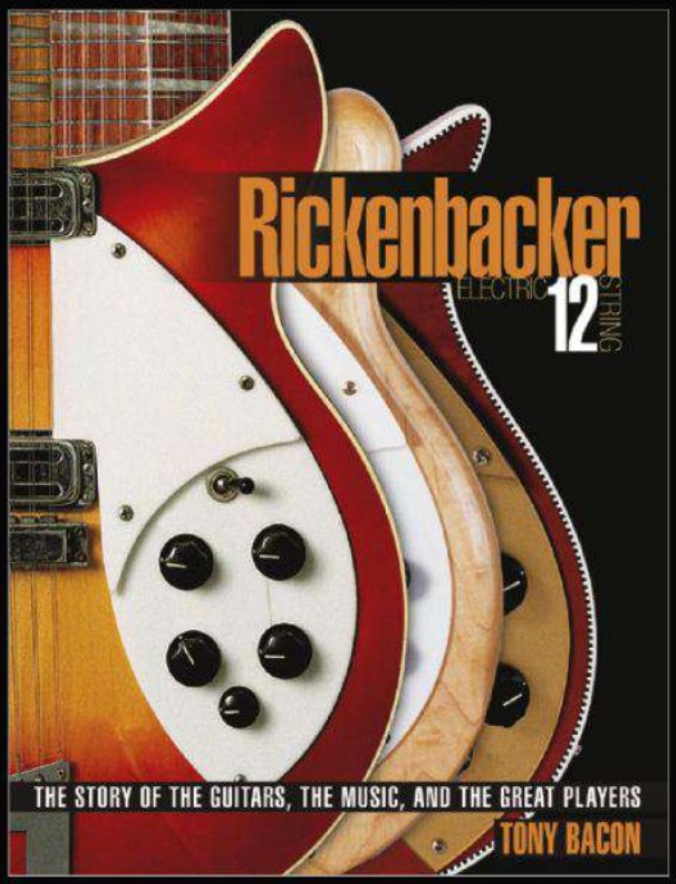

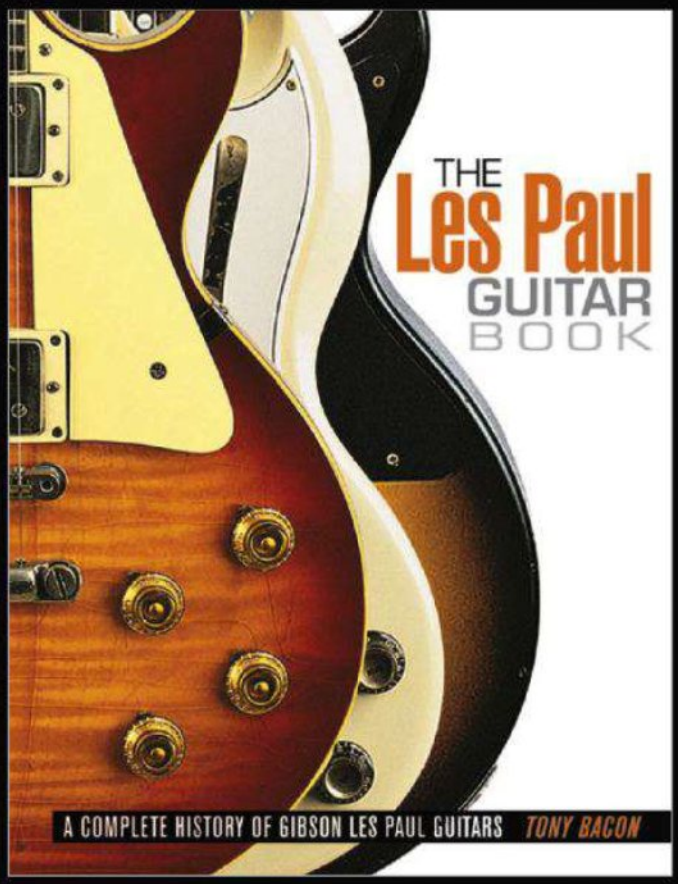

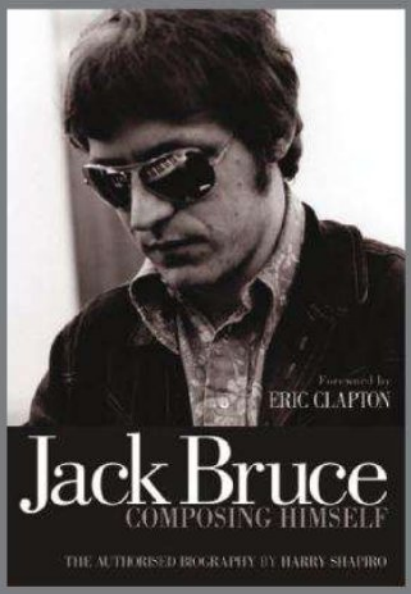

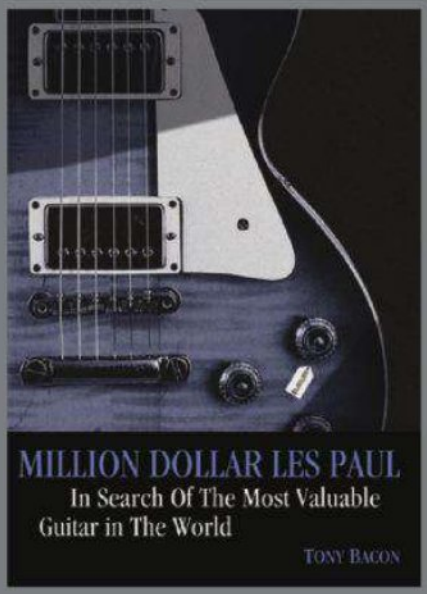

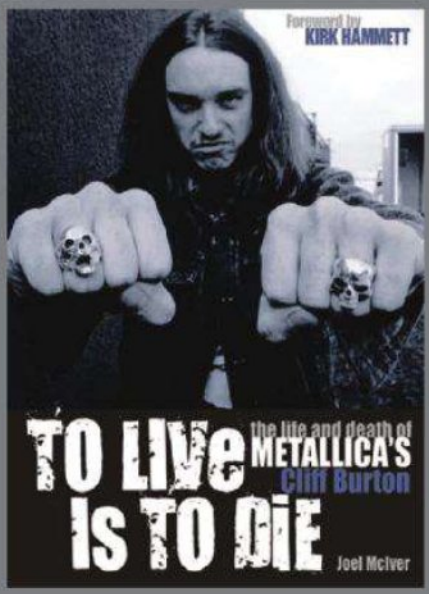

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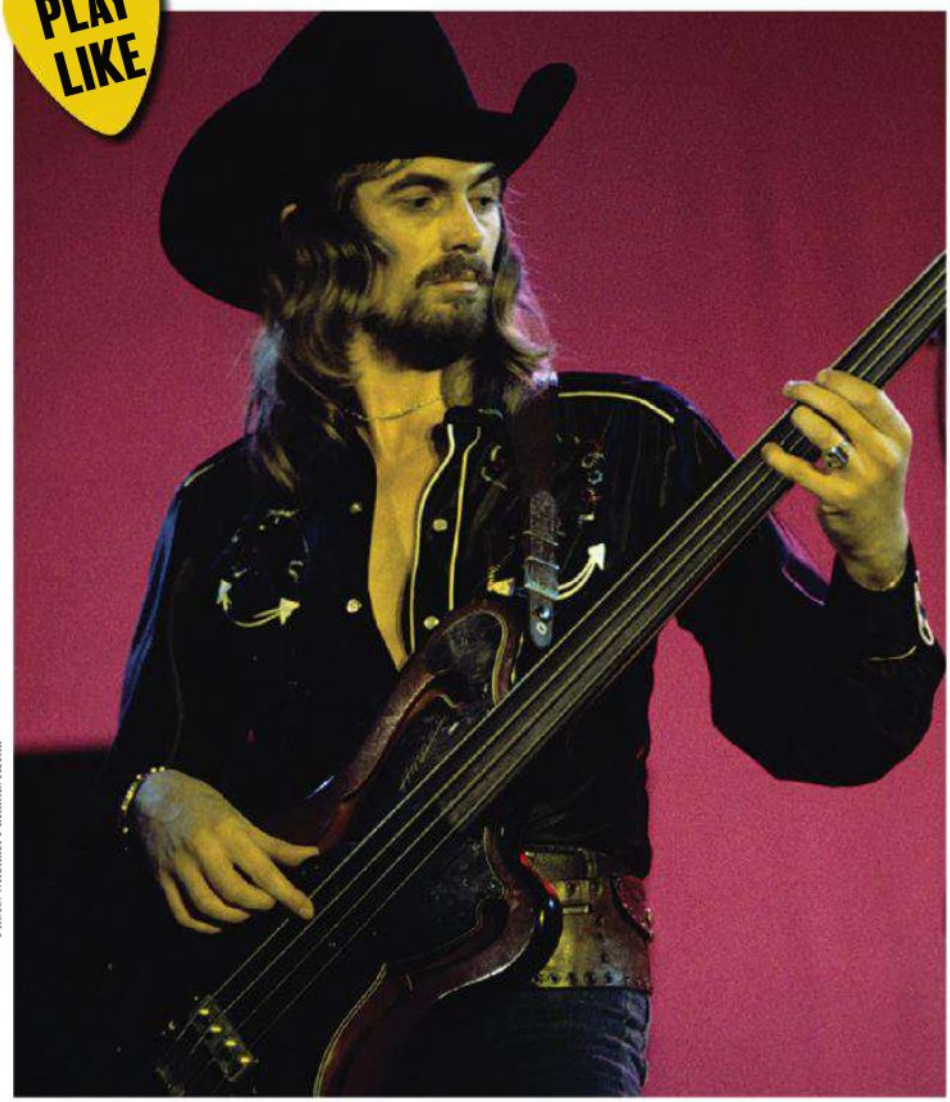


Photo: Michael Putland/Retna

Boz Burrell

Rock? On a fretless? It's not easy, but one man proved it can be done – first in the extreme world of King Crimson, and then adding mucho funkiness to Bad Company. Gareth Morgan lays it all out

Bass Techniques

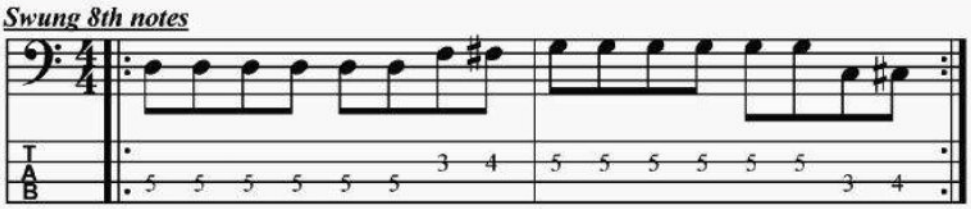
Boz Burrell was probably the only person who was taught how to play bass by King Crimson guitarist Robert Fripp – but his main claim to fame was providing the bottom end for blues rock supergroup Bad Company.

Born Raymond Burrell in 1946 in Holbeach, Lincolnshire, Boz had a short career as a singer in the mid '60s (he briefly replaced Roger Daltrey in the Who and recorded with members of what became Deep Purple). He joined King Crimson in 1970, and with Fripp's encouragement started playing bass. After just one album (*Islands*, 1971) Burrell and the rest of the band became disillusioned with Fripp's constant experimentation and quit en mass.

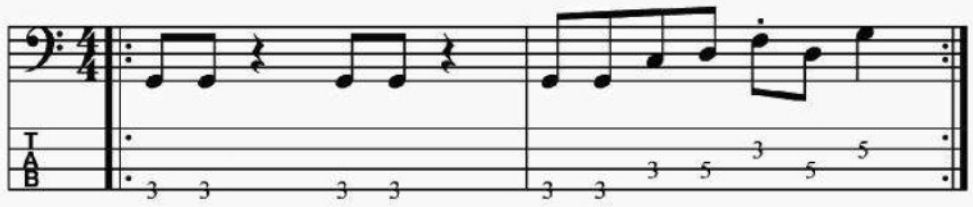
Burrell next auditioned for a band with ex-Free singer Paul Rodgers, Free's drummer Simon Kirke and ex-Mott The Hoople guitarist Mick Ralphs; they took the name Bad Company from one of Rodgers' songs, and were signed to Led Zeppelin's Swan Song label. Managed by Zeppelin's manager Peter Grant, Bad Company had eight years of phenomenal success with four platinum albums, wildly successful US tours and several hit singles, notably *Can't Get Enough* and *Feel Like Makin' Love*. In 1982 Rodgers quit, but the original line-up reconvened for a tour in 1999 and Rodgers and Ralphs continue to perform as Bad Company. Burrell died of a heart attack in Marbella, Spain on 21 September, 2006.

As we mentioned, Burrell is best known for his unusual choice of fretless bass in a rock context (fretless gives a naturally less defined sound and as such can lack the drive of a fretted bass, two qualities usually thought essential for rock bass playing). There's mention of him wielding a fretless Precision but he's more closely associated with the quirky Ampeg AUB-1, a semi-hollowbody bass with a scroll headstock. As well as providing a solid foundation for Bad Company, Burrell was never afraid to utilise the melodic possibilities inherent in the fretless bass. Although he definitely had serious skills, his bass parts are always tasteful and his passing represented the loss of a true innovator on the instrument.

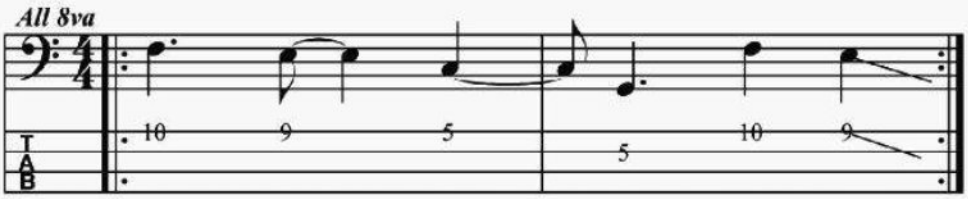
Ex 1: I take whatever I want

4/4 Time

It's not surprising that Bad Company's major success was in the States, given the obvious blues, country and even soul influences on the band; Ralphs was a big fan of Stax Records' fabulous studio and live guitarist Steve Cropper, while soul great Otis Redding was Rodgers' favourite singer. Burrell's melodic approach largely came from listening to Paul McCartney, but the main thing is how it all melded together. The chorus shuffle groove from *Can't Get Enough* forms the basis for our first example, a rootsy affair with standard chromatic linking melody.

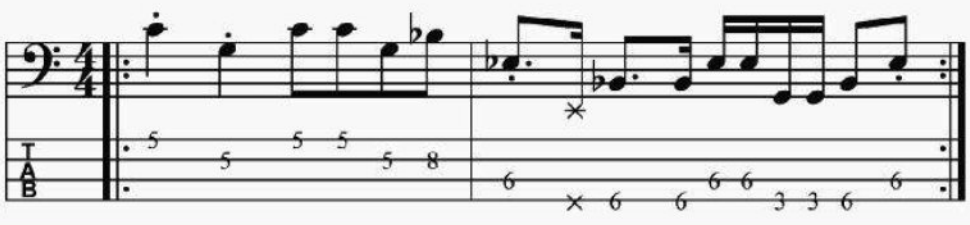
Ex 2: Turn on your light

4/4 Time

Our second example is based on the solid verse bass part from *Rock Steady* which is drawn, as are all of our examples, from *The Original Bad Co. Anthology* compilation, first released in 1999. Here Burrell tracks the guitar riff, leaving space in the first bar before delivering a simple melody that, again, cleverly stalks Mick Ralphs' guitar lick without doing anything as obvious as actually doubling it. When you listen to the track, be sure to soak up the underlying funkiness – it's a recurring theme, and one of the elements that helps set Bad Company apart from their peers.

Ex 3: Always on the run

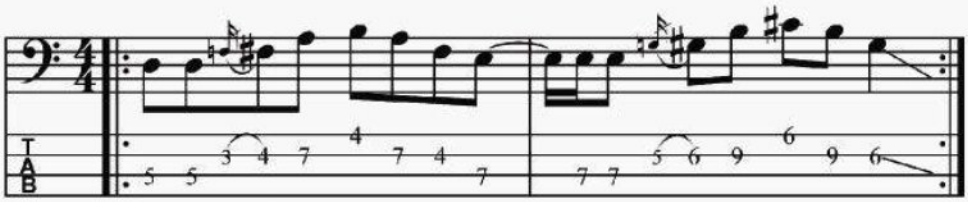
4/4 Time

Fretless players will know how difficult it is to stop the instrument sounding as if it doesn't have frets. It's a testament to Burrell's ability (and the famous growling thump of his Ampeg bass) that you don't immediately think 'fretless' when you hear his parts. However, there are plenty of instances of him taking full advantage of the fretless sound, and the band's title track *Bad Company* is an excellent example. Have a go at this version of the lick that introduces Ralph's solo – it works just as well on a fretted bass, but sounds really sweet on fretless – and note that it's written an octave lower than it's played.

Ex 4: Don't make no fuss

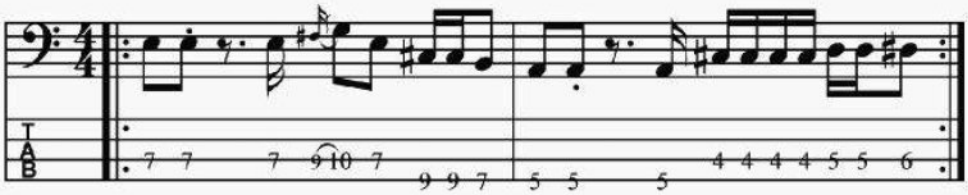
4/4 Time

Although the country influences are obvious in Rodgers' vocals and Ralphs' guitar licks and sound, there's very little in the way of straight two-feel country-style bass playing. The closest Burrell gets to being down home is on one section of *Run With The Pack*, which was also the title track of Bad Company's third album from 1976. Even then it's refreshingly non-straightforward, as you can see from our take above: the first half of bar one is straight, but there's plenty of melodic action elsewhere with funky pickups and a tricky sixteenth lick in bar two.

BROUGHT TO YOU IN ASSOCIATION WITH

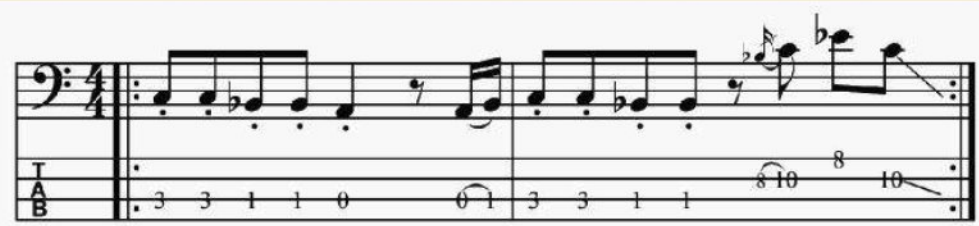
Ex 5: Time is getting tight

4/4 Time

We've already mentioned the ever-present funkiness that lies underneath Bad Company's music. It's in the outwardly straightforward material where this really comes to the fore, and it's within this context that you'll find Burrell at his most creative and improvisational. The song *Movin' On* is an excellent example, with Burrell hitting some wicked variations right from the intro. Our example is based on the chorus riff where the variation, as you can see from bar two, is a very rhythmic one. Have a play through it and catch on to the extra excitement that can be generated from such a simple idea.

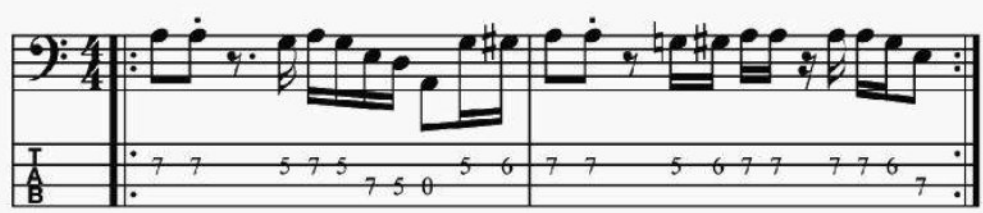
Ex 6: Wrap you in the heavens

4/4 Time

As is the fate of many an honest, hard-working rock band, a choice selection of Bad Company's songs have passed into the great but possibly overexposed pub band pantheon. *Can't Get Enough* is probably the song most aired in venues where the carpet is sticky and the beer runs free, but the excellent *Feel Like Makin' Love* runs it a fairly close second – they're both good fun to play but *Feel Like...* just shades it for bass players. How could it not? As well as the squeezed-out note in bar one, Burrell constantly varies his idea in bar two, one of which is represented by our example.

Ex 7: Head up in the clouds

4/4 Time

Space is an important element of Burrell's playing – you've doubtless noticed the numerous staccato dotted notes (a staccato dot means 'play half the written length') in our examples and also his reluctance to fill up a bar either melodically or rhythmically. We've also mentioned McCartney's obvious influence, and our seventh example handily combines tight control with a cool, McCartney-esque high register fill. This should sound like the intro and bridge sections from *Downhill Ryder*, and it's another one where keeping the funk involved is of paramount importance.

Ex 8: His first Beatles song

4/4 Time

You don't need a fretless bass to play any of the eight examples featured here... in fact, with most of them a fretted bass is a distinct advantage. Our final example definitely fits into this category, and it's based on Burrell's work-out at the end of the chorus section in *Shooting Star*, originally from the *Straight Shooter* album of 1975. He matches his lick to one of Kirke's drum fills, which is a useful device for making a rhythm section sound nice and tight. Our version might look a bit tricky at first glance, but the slow tempo and the availability of the open string should make it eminently playable.

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Back Stage

Did you know this month...

April 1985: PRS moves from a small workshop to the 1812 Virginia Avenue factory in Annapolis, signalling their official launch. Obsessed with guitars from a young age, Paul Reed Smith began building instruments in his parents' house in the day and peddling them to musicians by night. Smith was skilled at blagging his way backstage at local venues, and by the time he'd built just 17 guitars he'd already managed to get orders from huge names including Peter Frampton and Ted Nugent. Smith showed the Frampton guitar to his hero, Carlos Santana, who expressed an interest but was tied down to a Gibson deal at the time. Four years on Santana bought one, and quickly became PRS's most loyal devotee. The first model to leave the production line was the Custom. With mentorship from ex-Gibson president Ted McCarty, and Smith's determination, PRS has become the third-largest guitar maker in the US.

Paul Reed Smith used Frampton's guitar to hook Carlos Santana

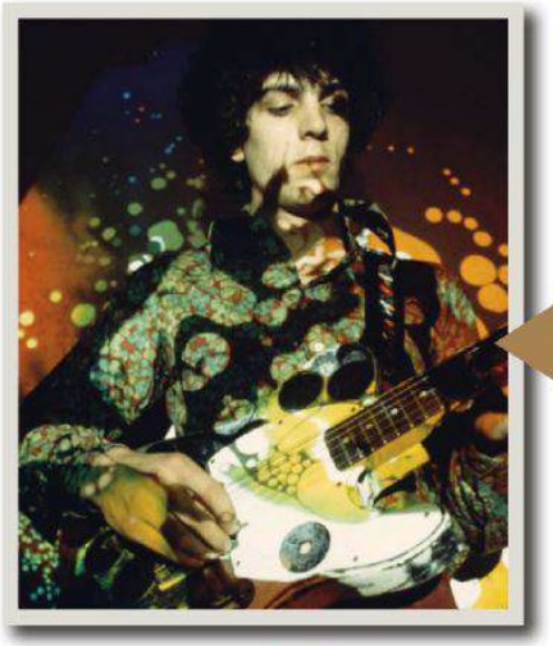

Photo by Andrew Whittuck/Redferns

6 April 1968: Pink Floyd announce they are parting company with founder member, frontman and songwriter Syd Barrett. Pink Floyd's '67 debut album *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* went down a storm in the UK, hitting the charts at #6, but it also spelled the beginning of the end for Barrett, for as the band grew in stature so did the pressure on their singer. It's impossible to separate truth from fiction when it comes to Barrett's psychological condition, and some of the rumours have been sensationalised beyond recognition. Barrett would reportedly play one single note throughout a gig or slowly detune his guitar – but was this his mental state or a rebellious protest? While Syd was no stranger to the medicine cabinet, he was also strongly opposed to record label ethics, so there's most likely a little truth in both sides of the story. Syd's behaviour became increasingly bizarre and he was often a no-show a gigs, and when the band decided not to pick him up for a gig in January '68, it was the end for the 'crazy diamond'. *A Saucerful Of Secrets* would be his last album with Pink Floyd.

10 April 1970: Headlines announce that the Beatles have split. Wishing to avoid press and promo duties prior to the release of his solo album, Paul McCartney asked Brian Epstein's assistant Peter Brown to compile some questions for him. In the 'interview' Macca stated that he 'had no further plans to record or appear with the Beatles... or to write any music with John.' This statement was seized upon by Mirror journalist Don Short, and the ensuing headlines reported the end of the Fab Four. The statement riled Lennon, who had decided to leave much earlier but had kept quiet for his bandmates' sake. 'Paul hasn't left. I sacked him,' came Lennon's vitriolic reply. Though the band was all but over by this time (the members all had individual projects), the public had been blissfully unaware of the extent of the problems.

7 April 1962: Keith Richards and Mick Jagger meet Brian Jones at the Ealing Jazz Club. The Ealing club was the place to be for aspiring blues musicians, as Alexis Korner had chosen the venue for his 'Rhythm And Blues' night where his band, Blues Incorporated – the first amplified R&B combo in the UK – frequently performed. When the Glimmer Twins met Jones, who had renamed himself Elmo Lewis in tribute to the legendary Elmore James, he was guesting in the band alongside Charlie Watts. Richards was dazzled by Jones's slide playing on a rendition of *Dust My Broom*, and the trio soon discovered they were kindred spirits. Before long Jones had moved in and had named their new group the Rolling Stones.

4 April 1968: The New Generation Club becomes the venue for Martin Luther King's unofficial 'wake'. Having heard the news of Dr King's assassination, musicians including Jimi Hendrix, Buddy Guy and BB King gathered at the club for an all-night tribute. After widespread rioting, New York was on shut-down and anywhere selling alcohol was closed, but as the club was alcohol-free the show went on. King's last words had been to ask bandleader Ben Branch to play *Take My Hand, Precious Lord* at the meeting they were due to attend that night.

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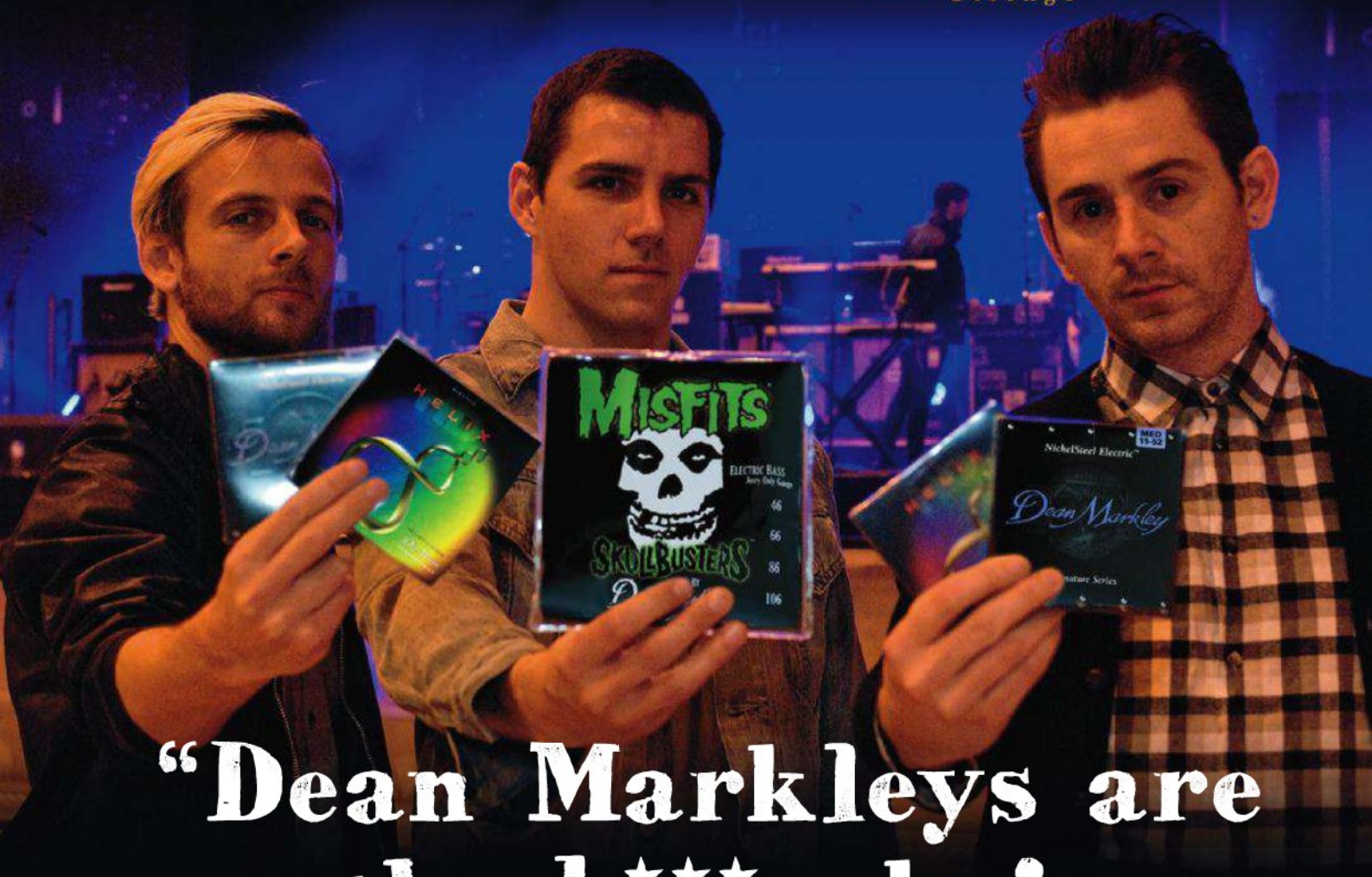

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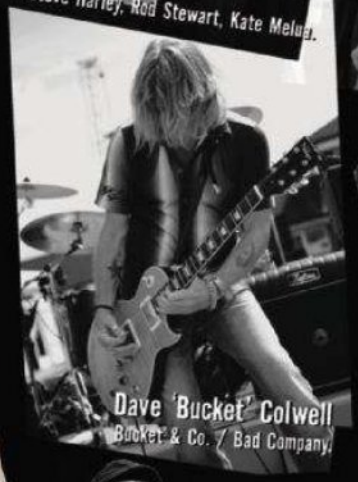

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